

MESSAGE: "I'M SO HAPPY"

PSALM 146:5-10

Within the Christian creeds are distilled some of the most important Biblical truths. One of these is Fatherhood of God. While most monotheistic religions have a general idea of God as a metaphorical "father", in Christianity, due to the teaching of Jesus, we view God in a very personal sense as Father. Because of this close personal relationship established through Jesus Christ we are confident that God has our best interest at heart.

The Apostles Creed also affirms the Trinity and the relationships between the Persons of the Trinity. God in Himself is relationship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is why relationships are so important to God.



What is relationship?

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How would you define being happy. Is happiness getting what you want? Living where you want? Doing what you want? We often confuse happiness and joy with euphoria and pleasure. While these are not mutually exclusive they are not the same. Euphoria is a temporary feeling of well-being and an elevation of mood. Pleasure is a feeling of enjoyment that is again temporary. Happiness is a sense of fulfillment. While joy results from having purpose and direction. While pleasure and euphoria may accompany these they do not determine them. People may be joyful in adverse circumstances, and happy in the midst of hard labor. For the Christian our happiness and joy is determined by our relationship with God as Father, a confidence in His power over all circumstances and His knowledge of our circumstances.

What is happiness?

PSALM 146:5-10

5 Happy *is he* who *has* the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope *is* in the LORD his God,
6 Who made heaven and earth, The sea, and all that *is* in them; Who keeps truth forever,
7 Who executes justice for the oppressed, Who gives food to the hungry. The LORD gives freedom to the prisoners.
8 The LORD opens *the eyes of* the blind; The LORD raises those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous.
9 The LORD watches over the strangers; He relieves the fatherless and widow; But the way of the wicked He turns upside down.
10 The LORD shall reign forever — Your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!

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This magic ring seal is likely Gnostic in origin.

In Romans 5:11 we are told that we can rejoice in our relationship with God since we have been reconciled to Him through Jesus Christ. What this passage and Paul's statements in 2 Corinthians 5 indicate is that something has gone terribly wrong in humanity's relationship with God. We are described by Paul as "enemies" of God. From a Christian point of view due to our arrogant and selfish natures we are all in rebellion against God to some extent. Some say that God could unilaterally surrender to the demands of humanity, but to do so would have 2 horrendous effects:

1. A creation ruled by arrogance and selfishness – the brutality of such a world is unfathomable.
2. God would cease to be God – He would have surrendered His authority over the universe and everything would collapse.

ROMANS 5:8-11

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

11 And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

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While it seems simple for God to just surrender, such a decision is not in our best interest. His only other option was to expunge humanity from existence, but we were too important to Him. God must redeem us so that the brokenness inside us can be fixed. Only this can allow us to come into relationship with Him without diminishing His authority.

Early Christians intuitively understood this, in the Apostles Creed it states: I believe in God, the Father, Almighty [Governing with complete authority], Maker [Creator] of Heaven and Earth [the whole of the universe]... This establishes 3 aspects of our relationship with God.

1. He is our Father.
2. He has the power to do what needs to be done.
3. He made us and understands how to fix us.

APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, 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 lower regions. 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. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal Church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, and the life everlasting. Amen.

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The Apostles Creed developed during a difficult time in Christian history. Most scholars believe that the basic structure of the creed developed in the mid-2nd century. The 1st mention of a type of structural creed is made by Irenaeus [130-202], Bishop of Lyon. It is believed that he wrote around the year 180.

The formal creeds clearly developed against the background of Christianity's struggle with Gnostic intrusions. Most of these denied the incarnation of Jesus. They also view the God of the Old Testament as derivative deity who was at best a mistaken ignorant being and at worst a malevolent being that trapped humanity's spiritual essence in material bodies. The God who created everything was unknowable except through an experience of transcendent enlightenment.

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The Christ Spirit was the direct emanation of the God and he directly came to inhabit the man Jesus at his baptism. The Christ Spirit used Jesus to teach humanity how to experience “gnosis” or enlightenment. This doctrine shifted and took on different forms and yet the central core denied the Incarnation and viewed salvation as a form of enlightenment.

Teachers of these doctrines were attracted to the Christian communities. The establishment of Catechism requirements for new Christians and the affirmation of a set baptismal creed was used to exclude Gnostics from Christian fellowships.

Colossians 1:19-23

COLOSSIANS 1:19-23

19 For it pleased *the Father that* in Him [*Jesus Christ*] all the fullness should dwell,

20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled

22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight —

23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

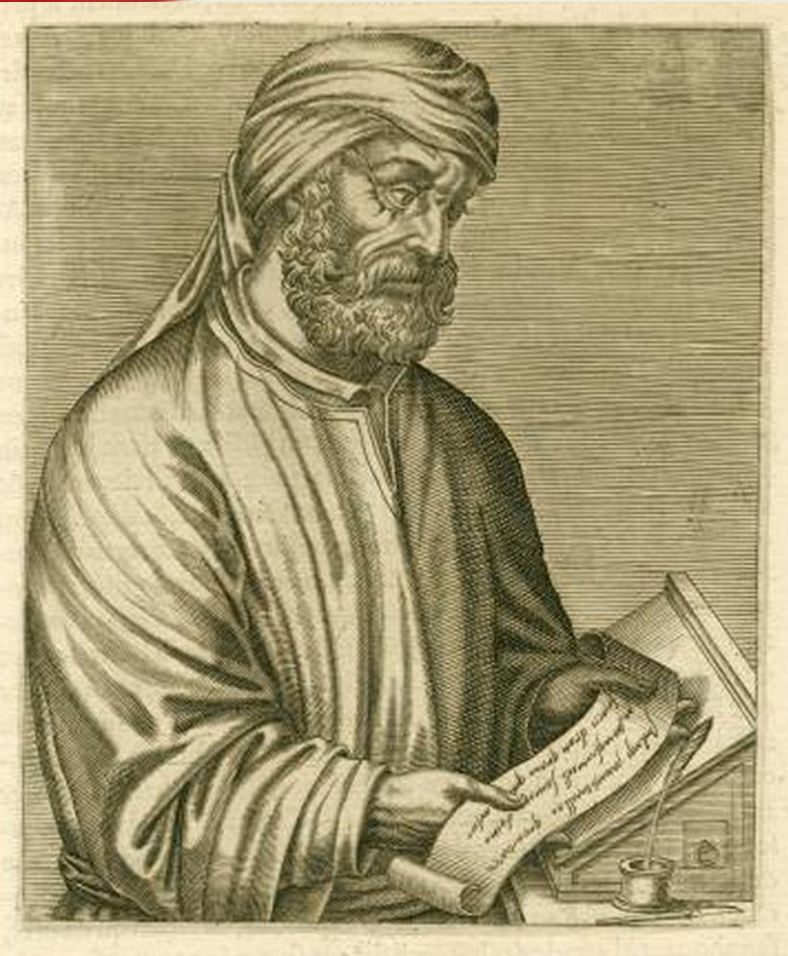
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One of the earliest baptismal creeds recorded is that of Hippolytus from about 210. It has many phrases that are in the Apostles Creed.

The Christian apologist Tertullian in his writings from about the same time mentions creedal statements that are very similar to our present Apostle's Creed. Tertullian also coined the term "Trinity" as a description of God's nature.

The Old Roman Symbol is the oldest Creed used as a statement of faith for public worship. It was not developed in Rome but seems to have been widely used in the ancient Christian world. It got its name when the Roman Church resisted Charlemagne's dictum to use the standardized text of the Apostles Creed throughout the Frankish kingdoms. The Roman Symbol clearly forms the original basis of the Apostles Creed. It is possible that it does go back to the 2nd century.



Tertullian [AD 155-240]

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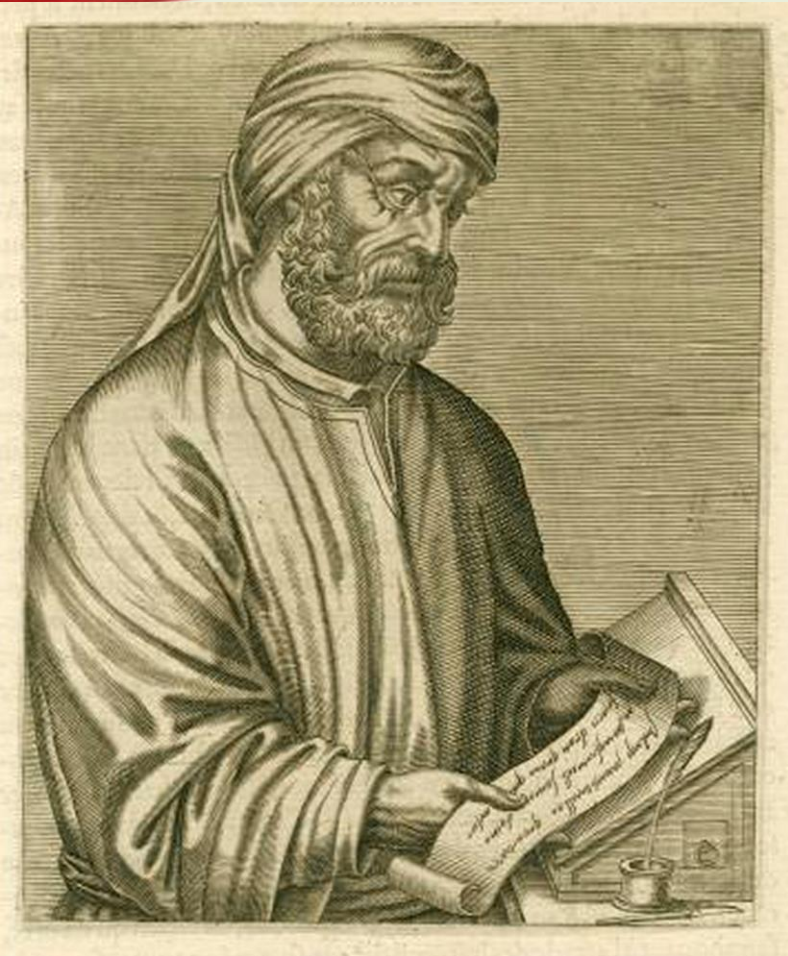
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Two of the words describing God are very ancient going back to the New Testament - Father and All Governing or Almighty. It appears that Christians added the phrase "Creator of the heavens and the earth". This was used to exclude Gnostics who believed that God created the "heavens" or spiritual realms but not the "earth" or material realms which were created by the flawed god of the Old Testament.

2 Corinthians 5:17-19



Tertullian [AD 155-240]

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2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-19

17 Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

18 Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

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Jesus calls the 12 Apostles
by James Tissot

This statement of Christian belief is based on Matthew 28:19. Where Jesus commands His followers to go and make disciples "baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit..." IN the baptismal formulation of Hippolytus the first portion of the statement concerning the Fatherhood of God was made, which the baptismal candidate affirmed by saying "I believe" then he was baptized the 1st time. Next the statement about Jesus Christ was made and he was again asked to affirm it. He would be baptized a 2nd time. The final statement about the work of the Holy Spirit and the ministry of the church would be stated then after the candidate affirmed this he would be baptized a 3rd time and allowed to participate in Communion.

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The terrible truth of creation is that it has been corrupted, not by a twisted secondary deity but by the sin of humanity. Our arrogance and selfish rebellion against God and His purpose has horribly corrupted this world. The brokenness of our relationship with God is clear in the Old Testament. Only in Isaiah and Malachi is God alluded to as a Father of His people and the tone in these passages is prophetic of the future when the Messiah comes. God's relation with His people is that of a master, creator, sovereign or judge. While Jewish people can metaphorically identify God as Father in the sense of a Creator it is difficult for them to grasp the concept of a close personal relationship with Him as "father" let alone "Abba" or "Dad".

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Yet this is exactly what Christianity taught. God is "Dad" because we have been adopted into His family through the redemption work of Jesus Christ. Through Christ we become children of God. Paul tells us that Romans 5:8-11 that though we were God's enemies Jesus Christ redeemed us and brought about reconciliation with God. Because of this we now know God as Father.

Matthew 28:19-20



Jesus calls the 12 Apostles
by James Tissot

MATTHEW 28:19-20

19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age.*” Amen.

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A modern movement in Christianity called "progressive Christianity" would do away with the concept of Christ's atonement. They opt for the belief that Jesus died to satisfy humanity's blood lust. God surrendered to this brutality because He unable to convince humanity of his forgiveness any other way. In this view the atonement was completely unnecessary because God can simply declare everyone righteous and make them so. Salvation in this system is obtained by recognizing God's love for us where we are at. We must strive to accept ourselves and others as we are. To accomplish this we commit ourselves to justice in society.

א	Aleph and God
אֱלֹהִים	Elohim: God
אֵל	EI: God, Mighty One
אֵל שַׁדַּי	El Shaddai: God Almighty
אֵל עֶלְיוֹן	El Elyon: God Most High
אֵל עוֹלָם	El Olam: Everlasting God
אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם	Elohi Olam: Everlasting God

Who is God in the OT?

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Unfortunately, because we never deal with our own arrogance we get determine what this justice is by our own personal standards. And because we have not dealt with our own selfishness we attempt to enforce our standards, clueless of our own hypocrisy. Since we believe God agrees with us, we wont let Him hold us accountable for our injustices...we make Him into a "mini-Me". And like the Gnostics of old we attempt to stand in judgement of God and not the reverse. God is not our Father, he is our "buddy".

What a frightening and unhappy world we create for ourselves and for others. A world of mob justice, hypocrisy and chaos. Sin still reigns in our hearts...not Christ.

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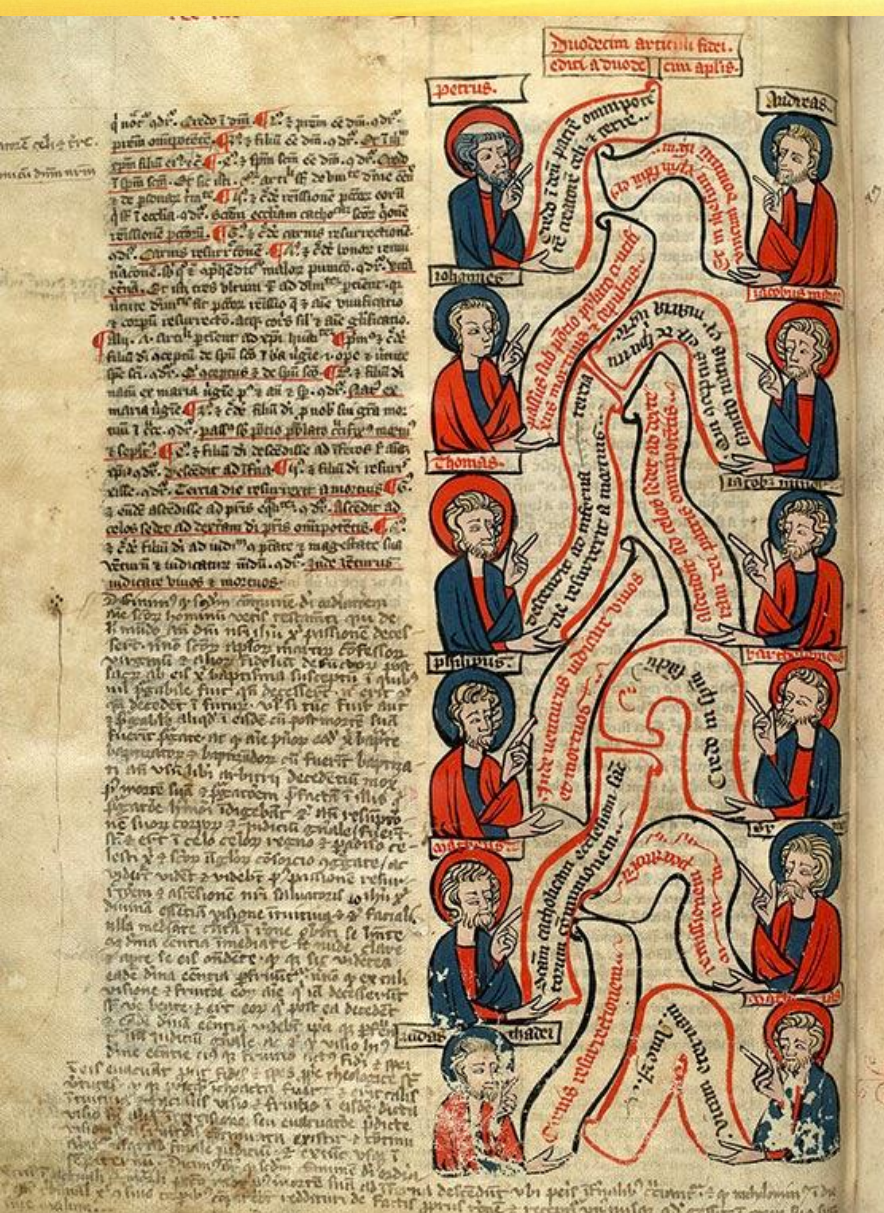
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Who is God in the OT?

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LUKE 1:46-49

46 And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His
maidservant; For behold, henceforth all
generations will call me blessed.
49 For He who is mighty has done great things
for me, And holy is His name.



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God can be our Father because He is All-Governing, the Greek word used in the Apostles' Creed means "to have all authority" the title for God "El Shaddai" in the Old Testament is translated by this word. It means that God is all sufficient and all powerful. If He surrenders to our will He is not God. The atonement is the only way God could remain Almighty and yet redeem humanity. Because he created this universe and us, He knows how to fix the universe and us. The problem is we have to want to be fixed. If we don't we are still in rebellion and doomed to our own destruction and we are incapable of having a father-child relationship with God.

The Apostles Creed from
the 1300s
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GALATIANS 4:4-7

4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!”

7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

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What is Joy?

Joy is to be found in this great truth:

God loves us and has our best interest at heart, also He has the power to do something about it and the knowledge to do it.

In Psalm 146 we meet God in these terms.