

The Apostasy

THE CREED OF NICAEA (325)... This was the original Nicene Creed. It was revised and finalized at the Council of Constantinople in 381...

We believe in one God the Father All-sovereign, maker of all things. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made, things in heaven and things on the earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, and became man, suffered, and rose on the third day, ascended into the heavens, and is coming to judge living and dead. And in the Holy Spirit. And those that say 'There was when he was not,' and, 'Before he was begotten he was not,' and that, 'He came into being from what-is-not,' or those that allege, that the son of God is 'Of another substance or essence' or 'created,' or 'changeable' or 'alterable,' these the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.



For centuries men gathered and argued concerning the nature of Deity. Constantine assembled scholars of various factions at Nicaea in the year 325. After two months of bitter debate, they compromised on a definition which for generations has been the doctrinal statement among Christians concerning the Godhead.

I invite you to read that definition and compare it with the statement of the boy Joseph. He simply says that God stood before him and spoke to him. Joseph could see

Him and could hear Him. He was in form like a man, a being of substance. Beside Him was the resurrected Lord, a separate being, whom He introduced as His Beloved Son and with whom Joseph also spoke.

I submit that in the short time of that remarkable vision Joseph learned more concerning Deity than all of the scholars and clerics of the past.

Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Great Things Which God Has Revealed," *Liahona*, May 2005, 80–83



History tells us, for example, of a great council held in a.d. 325 in Nicaea. By this time Christianity had emerged from the dank dungeons of Rome to become the state religion of the Roman Empire, but the church still had problems—chiefly the inability of Christians to agree among themselves on basic points of doctrine. To resolve differences, Emperor Constantine called together a group of Christian bishops to establish once and for all the official doctrines of the church.

Consensus did not come easily. Opinions on such basic subjects as the nature of God were diverse and deeply felt, and debate was spirited. Decisions were not made by inspiration or revelation, but by majority vote, and some disagreeing factions split off and formed new churches. Similar doctrinal councils were held later in a.d. 451, 787, and 1545, with similarly divisive results.

The beautiful simplicity of Christ's gospel was under attack from an enemy that was even more destructive than the scourges and the crosses of early Rome: the philosophical meanderings of uninspired men. The doctrine became based more on popular opinion than on revelation. This period of time was called the Dark Ages. They were dark largely because the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ had been lost.

(Elder M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, Nov 1994, 65-67)

Who is Heavenly Father?

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What does it mean that I have a Divine Nature?

“If any of us could now see the God we are striving to serve – if we could see our Father who dwells in the Heavens, we should learn that we are as well acquainted with him as we are with our earthly father, and he would be as familiar to us in the expression of his countenance and we should be ready to embrace him and fall upon his neck and kiss him, if we had the privilege. And still we, unless the vision of the Spirit is opened to us, know nothing about God. You know much about him, if you but realize it. And there is no other one item that will so astound you, when your eyes are opened in eternity, as to think that you were so stupid in the body.” (Brigham Young, JD 8:30)

“It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the character of God, and to know that we may converse with Him as one man converses with another.” (Joseph Smith, Teachings, p.345)

“God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder Heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power, was to make himself visible – I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form – like yourselves in all the person, image and very form as a man.” (Joseph Smith, HC, 6:305)

“And now we’re here – our memories are veiled – and we’re showing God and ourselves what we can do. And nothing is going to startle us more when we pass through the veil to the other side than to realize how well we know our Father and how familiar his face is to us.” (President Ezra Taft Benson, Ensign, Dec 1988, p.6)

“We know, because the Lord has revealed it in this our day, that we are the spirit children of an exalted, glorified being, a holy man who has a body of flesh and bones and who is our Father in Heaven.

“We know that the name of the kind of life he lives is Eternal Life and that it consists of living in the family unit and of possessing all power, all might, and all dominion.” (Elder Bruce R. McConkie, Ensign, Nov 1976, p.106)

“You are His child all the time, not just when you are good, you are his child when you are bad. You have within you a portion of Divinity that is real and tremendous and marvelous and wonderful.” (President Gordon B. Hinckley)

“I am perfectly satisfied that my Father and my God is a cheerful, pleasant, lively, and good-natured being. Why? Because I am cheerful, pleasant, lively, and good-natured when I have his Spirit. That is one reason why I know; and another is – the Lord said, through Joseph Smith, ‘I delight in a glad heart and a cheerful countenance.’ That arises from the perfection of His attributes; He is a jovial, lively person, and a beautiful man.” (Heber C. Kimball, Journal of Discourses, Volume 4:222)

“Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles tells us a tender personal story that makes this point in a penetrating way. When he was a teenager his family moved from a very comfortable environment for young Elder Eyring to a location that was not to his liking. He sulked for a bit until the Spirit spoke directly to him about who he was in God’s plan and how we out to proceed. One day the Spirit instructed, ‘When you find out who you are, you will be sorry you didn’t try harder.’ I suspect this spiritual admonition for more diligent effort is probably appropriate for most of us. The Lord will lead us in our particular role if we will seek and follow His guidance.”

(Quoted by Elder Robert C. Oaks, BYU Devotional, ‘Understand Who You Are’ 21 March 2006.)