



1700 years ago the church was a barraged by false teachers. One of the most serious false doctrines attacked the Deity of Christ; it taught that Jesus was not equal to the Father, that He was not fully God. The Christian Church condemned that teaching, called Arianism¹, in 325 AD with the Nicene Creed². The Nicene Creed adamantly confesses the Deity of Jesus: He is the Christ, the Son of God, Very God of Very God, Who is of one substance with the Father.

Almost immediately, the condemned false teachers attacked the Deity of the Holy Spirit, claiming that the Holy Spirit was not equal to the Father, that He was not fully God. Once again the Church met, condemn the false teachers, and clarified the teaching of the Holy Christian Church concerning the Deity of the Holy Spirit. This paragraph was added to the Nicene Creed in 381AD:

And I believe in
THE HOLY SPIRIT,
the Lord and Giver of Life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son
who with the Father and the Son together
is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the Prophets³.

¹ Note: Arianism is not to be confused with Aryanism: the latter formed the core of 20th century Nazi racial ideology. Arianism is a theological term to describe the false teachings of Arius in the 4th Century AD.

² Unfortunately, these false teachings persist even to this day, most notably with the Jehovah Witnesses, the Mormons, and so many untrained clergy leading unaffiliated and unsupervised “non-denominational” churches. These groups either outright deny the Nicene Creed; or ignore it. Most people in these groups have never heard of the Nicene Creed, nor know the truths it confesses, nor understand Church history and its significance for today.

³ The original Nicene Creed of 325 AD ended with “And in the Holy Spirit.” At the time, there was no controversy concerning the Holy Spirit. This section in the sermon, plus the following sentences, were added in 381 AD and confirmed in later Ecumenical Councils of 431 AD and 451 AD: “And I believe in One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen!”

The emphasis on the Deity of the Holy Spirit is taught the same way the Deity of the Father and of the Son is taught: by confessing that each person of the Holy Trinity is the **Creator**, and not a creature nor part of Creation. If the Holy Spirit is the **Creator**, then He is **NOT** a part of Creation; He is not a creature, nor is He a “thing.” Here is how the Nicene Creed teaches that each Person of the Trinity is **Creator**:

THE FATHER

I believe in *one God*,
THE FATHER ALMIGHTY,
Maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

THE SON

And in *one Lord*
JESUS CHRIST . . .
of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;

THE HOLY SPIRIT

And I believe in THE HOLY SPIRIT,
the Lord and **Giver of Life**,

By describing each Person of the Holy Trinity as the **Creator**, the Nicene Creed is confessing that **each Person is God⁴**. We believe in *One God in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*.

It is Biblical to say that the Holy Spirit is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. *He was with God in the beginning*.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. Genesis 1:1-2

The Bible doesn't teach us exactly what the role of the Holy Spirit was in the Creation of the world, but He was there as the Creator, giving life to the world. The Holy Spirit is *the Lord and Giver of life*.

What the Bible does expand on is the role of the Holy Spirit in the *New Creation*, that is, in the creating of **faith** and **new life** in believers. This work of the Holy Spirit is summarized with the word **sanctification⁵**.

⁴ Perhaps I can take some liberty with the “Athanasian Creed” and teach it like this: “the Father is Creator, the Son is Creator, and the Holy Spirit is Creator; yet there are not 3 Creators but One Creator.”

⁵ Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit. God must make the unwilling willing. He must give strength and power to conquer sin . . . “for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose

Sanctification means that the Holy Spirit has worked through the Word of God to create faith within you; and to set you apart from the world by bringing you into the Kingdom of God. *Faith is pictured as being moved from the Old Creation of sin and death and into the New Creation of faith and life.*

The **Old Creation**⁶ was destroyed by Adam and his disobedience. Adam's sin is passed on to *all people* at conception, and we are conceived and born in **original sin**, with an Old Adam within us, **a sinful nature** bent on disobedience, rebellion, and immorality. There is only guilt, corruption, and death in the **old creation**.

The **New Creation** is brought by Christ, and His life, death, and resurrection. His work of salvation is a gift from God to *all people*, where your sins of disobedience, rebellion, and immorality are forgiven and removed from you. You have peace with God, holiness, and eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The “Old Creation” is everything in the world --- and it is decaying and dying, and will be destroyed on the Last Day. The New Creation is here --- it is faith in Christ – and it is eternal.

Jesus describes the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Creation with the image of “*born again*.”

Jesus answered, “Truly, truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. John 3:5-6

The *born again* word picture is a New Creation image; a life metaphor. It emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit in giving you **new, eternal life** through the water of Holy Baptism⁷. *The Holy Spirit is your Lord and the Giver of eternal life!*

(Philippians 2:13).” We must remember therefore that Sanctification, like Redemption and Creation, is a work of God. The Abiding Word, III.279, Sanctification, Roger L. Sommer

⁶ The Old Creation is a way to talk about a life without Christ, trapped in sin, with only death to look forward to --- the things Adam brought in the world when he sinned. “New Creation” is a way to talk about faith in Christ – “the second Adam” -- who brings forgiveness, new life, and the certain hope of Eternal Life into the world. Christ is “re-creating” the world as God intended it to be! An example of this kind of language is found in 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a New Creation; the old has gone, the new is here!” And Jesus in John 3: “You must be born again!” In other words, you will not die in Adam’s sin (“Old” Creation) but you will live through faith in Christ (“New” Creation).

⁷ The comparison is with your first birth from your mother, where you were completely passive, and did not assist your mother in any way in giving birth to you. You were born into original sin, and death is the only thing you had to look forward to. In comparison, when you are born again, it is God the Holy Spirit’s work, not yours. You were completely passive, it is a gift from God, not a work of your own. You were born again into righteousness, and eternal life is a gift given to you!

Now that you are *born again* in Holy Baptism, you have a *new life* to live **until you inherit eternal life**. Your everyday life is now lived in Christ, it is lived in faith, it is lived empowered by the Holy Spirit. He is continually at work within you, always forgiving your sins and strengthening your faith through His Holy Word and the sacred meal of Holy Communion. Your *new life in Christ*, empowered by the Holy Spirit, it's full of good works and good words⁸.

It is the Holy Spirit . . .

- Who empowers you to **love God**, hallow His Name, and worship Him
- Who motivates you to **listen, learn, and study** the Word of God
- Who prompts you to **love your neighbor** as Christ has loved you
- Who **bears fruit** in your life; *character traits* like love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control
- Who has given you **gifts to use** to build up the body of Christ and to reach out to the lost.

Your everyday life is now lived in Christ, it is lived in faith, it is lived empowered by the Holy Spirit. Now that you are *born again* in Holy Baptism, you have a *new life* to live **until you inherit eternal life**.

As conservative Lutheran Christians, we stand with believers of all times and all places in the One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church; and we boldly confess the **Deity of the Holy Spirit**. With the historic words of the Nicene Creed, we believe, teach and confess:

THE HOLY SPIRIT, the Lord and Giver of Life!

Amen!

⁸ Faith is the divine work in us which transforms us, gives us new birth out of God, slays the old Adam, makes us altogether different men in heart, affection, mind, and all powers, and brings with it the Holy Spirit. Oh, it is a living, energetic, active, mighty thing, this faith! It cannot but do good unceasingly. There is no question asked whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, the works at been done, and there is a continuous and doing of them. But any person not doing such works is without faith. He is groping in the dark, looking for faith and good works, and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are. The Abiding Word, III.282, Sanctification, Roger L. Sommer

Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of life, we praise and thank You forgiving us physical life, and the blessings we enjoy in both body and soul. We especially thank You for the new birth through Holy Baptism, where You have given us new life to live now, and the certain inheritance of eternal life when we die. Deepen our faith, confidence, and conviction in You and Your work in our lives. We pray this in Jesus, our crucified and risen Savior's Name, Amen.

Psalm 104

¹ Praise the Lord, my soul.
Lord my God, you are very great;
you are clothed with splendor and majesty.
² The Lord wraps himself in light as with a garment;
he stretches out the heavens like a tent
³ and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters.
He makes the clouds his chariot
and rides on the wings of the wind.
⁴ He makes winds his messengers,^[a]
flames of fire his servants.
⁵ He set the earth on its foundations;
it can never be moved.
⁶ You covered it with the watery depths as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
⁷ But at your rebuke the waters fled,
at the sound of your thunder they took to flight;
⁸ they flowed over the mountains,
they went down into the valleys,
to the place you assigned for them.
⁹ You set a boundary they cannot cross;
never again will they cover the earth.
¹⁰ He makes springs pour water into the ravines;
it flows between the mountains.
¹¹ They give water to all the beasts of the field;
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
¹² The birds of the sky nest by the waters;
they sing among the branches.
¹³ He waters the mountains from his upper chambers;
the land is satisfied by the fruit of his work.
¹⁴ He makes grass grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to cultivate—
bringing forth food from the earth:
¹⁵ wine that gladdens human hearts,
oil to make their faces shine,
and bread that sustains their hearts.
¹⁶ The trees of the Lord are well watered,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
¹⁷ There the birds make their nests;
the stork has its home in the junipers.
¹⁸ The high mountains belong to the wild goats;
the crags are a refuge for the hyrax.

¹⁹ He made the moon to mark the seasons,
and the sun knows when to go down.
²⁰ You bring darkness, it becomes night,
and all the beasts of the forest prowl.
²¹ The lions roar for their prey
and seek their food from God.
²² The sun rises, and they steal away;
they return and lie down in their dens.
²³ Then people go out to their work,
to their labor until evening.
²⁴ How many are your works, Lord!
In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
²⁵ There is the sea, vast and spacious,
teeming with creatures beyond number—
living things both large and small.
²⁶ There the ships go to and fro,
and Leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.
²⁷ All creatures look to you
to give them their food at the proper time.
²⁸ When you give it to them,
they gather it up;
when you open your hand,
they are satisfied with good things.
²⁹ When you hide your face,
they are terrified;
when you take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust.
³⁰ When you send your Spirit,
they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.
³¹ May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works—
³² he who looks at the earth, and it trembles,
who touches the mountains, and they smoke.
³³ I will sing to the Lord all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.
³⁴ May my meditation be pleasing to him,
as I rejoice in the Lord.
³⁵ But may sinners vanish from the earth
and the wicked be no more.
Praise the Lord, my soul.
Praise the Lord.^[b]

Titus 3:3-8

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. 8 This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

John 3:1-8

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council.² He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."³ Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."⁴ "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"⁵ Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit^[b] gives birth to spirit.⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You^[c] must be born again.'⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."