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The Cross

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I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

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For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day 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.

I 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 adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, universal, and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

The Cross

- The centrepiece for the Christian Faith
- Represents many things for Christians
- A place at which decisions need to be made, left, right or straight ahead?
- A place to come to terms with yourself in relationship to God
- A place to remember the Ultimate Sacrifice
- A symbol of your belief in Jesus Christ

Bible Texts

Galatians 6:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

1 Corinthians 2:2 (ESV)

² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Origin of the Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed is a statement of the orthodox faith of the early Christian church in opposition to certain heresies, especially Arianism. These heresies, which disturbed the church during the fourth century, concerned the doctrine of the trinity and of the person of Christ. In its present form this creed goes back partially to the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) with additions by the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381). It was accepted in its present form at the Council of Chalcedon in 451

Arian Heresy

Arianism is named for Arius, a teacher in the early 4th century A.D. One of the earliest and probably the most important item of debate among early Christians was the subject of Christ's deity. Was Jesus truly God in the flesh or was Jesus a created being? Was Jesus God or just like God? Arius held that Jesus was created by God as the first act of creation, that Jesus was the crowning glory of all creation. Arianism, then, is the view that Jesus was a created being with divine attributes, but was not divine in and of Himself.

Modern Heresies and Erroneous Teaching

I think culture is already there and the church will continue to be even more irrelevant when it quotes letters from 2,000 years ago as their best defense, when you have in front of you flesh-and-blood people who are your brothers and sisters, and aunts and uncles, and co-workers and neighbours, and they love each other and just want to go through life with someone.

Rob Bell on Gay Marriage

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
Hebrews 13:8

Modern Heresies and Erroneous Teaching

What if tomorrow someone digs up definitive proof that Jesus had a real, earthly, biological father named Larry, and archeologists find Larry's tomb and do DNA samples and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the virgin birth was really just a bit of mythologizing the Gospel writers threw in to appeal to the followers of the Mithra and Dionysian religious cults that were hugely popular at the time of Jesus, whose gods had virgin births?

Rob Bell – Velvet Elvis

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14

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Modern Heresies and Erroneous Teaching

"One of the mistakes that human beings make is believing that there is only one way...there are many paths to what you call God."

"I am a Christian who believes that there are certainly many more paths to God other than Christianity".

Oprah Winfrey

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and **the** life. No one comes to **the** Father except through me. John 14:6

There is no literal Adam

- This belief is endorsed by scientists and theologians including John Polkinghorne, Alister McGrath and C S Lewis
- Done as a way to fit the Bible into Scientific Theories and discoveries
 - Scientific study set out to prove the Bible and it can, but the Bible should not be discarded or modified to fit theory
- For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:19

False Teachings of the Crucifixion

Jesus was a folk legend

Of similar interest, **Josephus**, a Jewish historian who lived from **AD 37 to 90**, wrote the following in his 'Antiquities of the Jews'.

*'And there arose about this time a source of new trouble, one **Jesus**. He was a doer of **marvellous deeds**. This man was the so-called **Christ** and when Pilate had condemned him to the **Cross**, those who had loved him did not cease - for he **appeared to them, as they said, on the third day alive again.**'*

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False Teachings of the Crucifixion

Swoon Theory – Jesus never actually died on the Cross

The Roman Guards - The soldiers in charge of execution were specialists in capital punishment, and crucifixion was one of the most brutal forms of execution in history. Jesus was nailed to a cross after enduring horrible beatings at the hands of these professional death merchants, and every person put to death by way of crucifixion was dealt with by these soldiers. Jesus could not have survived crucifixion, and these soldiers made certain that Jesus was dead before His body was allowed to be taken

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False Teachings of the Crucifixion

Jesus body was stole so people thought He'd risen again

Why would 12 guys make up this story and hold to it despite their own possible torture and death, which did happen to at least 10, but not John

The problem with Errors and Heresies



This is a game called Jenga

³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 2 Tim 4:3-4

The problem with Errors and Heresies



This house is doomed to fall

And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and **great** was the **fall** of it.”

Matthew 7:27

This is what happens to our faith when we begin to doubt what God has told us in His Word

The House of Jenga

⁹ Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them.

Hebrews 13:9

so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

2 Tim 2:14

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CREATION



FALL



REDEMPTION



RESTORATION

THE STORY OF GOD

IS ABOUT

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The Story of the Kingdom of God

For a brief period of time when God created the world, perfect people walked through a perfect world in perfect union with God. The environment was lush and rich, with a menagerie of animals that inhabited the air, land, and sea. Every physical and spiritual need was fully met. There were no unfed stomachs or diseases to be feared. The gardens were free of weeds and thorns.

Man and woman, Adam and Eve, lived in perfect union with each other. There was no unhealthy competition, no power struggle, no vengeance or recrimination. There were no secret plots or harsh words, no fear, guilt, shame, or rebellion against authority. There was understanding, communication, and love.

The Story of the Kingdom of God

There was no struggle with identity, anxiety, depression, or addiction. There was no painful personal history to overcome. There was no fear of what might happen next, no mixed motives, no struggle with inordinate desire. There was no temptation to sin.

With God, too, there was a perfect union. People loved, worshiped, and obeyed as they were created to do. In the cool of the day they actually walked with God in the Garden, enjoying perfect fellowship with their Maker. They were God's resident managers, placed there to govern what he had made, and they did their job well. God had no reason to confront them, and they had nothing to confess. All was right, day after day. Life was better than anything we can imagine from our sin-scarred vantage point.

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The Story of the Kingdom of God

But sadly, it didn't last long. In the most significant rebellious act ever committed, man and woman stepped outside of God's ordained plan. In a second it all came crashing down. All of the amazing beauty of that world was deeply and permanently scarred.

In an instant, fear, guilt, and shame became standard human experiences. People who once lived in perfect harmony now accused, deceived, and fought for control. Weeds and disease became daily concerns. People began to desire what was evil and do what was wrong. Rather than submit to God's authority, they lived as their own gods. The world that once sang the song of perfection now groaned under the weight of the Fall.

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The Story of the Kingdom of God

Sin altered every thought, desire, word, and deed. It created a world of double-mindedness and mixed motives, self-worship and self-absorption. People desired to be served, but they hated serving. They craved control and nurtured delusions of self-sufficiency. They forgot their creator but worshiped his creation. Rather than loving people and using things to express it, people loved things and used people to get them. Humanity's second generation even committed murder. They began to lie, cheat, hide, and deny. People suffered at the hands of others from momentary thoughtlessness to unspeakable acts of physical and sexual abuse. For the first time, people wept from grief within and suffering without.

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The Story of the Kingdom of God

God saw his world ravaged by sin. He was unwilling for it to stay this way, so he devised a plan. It would take thousands of years. It would mean harnessing the forces of nature and controlling the course of human history, but he could do it. From the moment of the Fall, for generation after generation, he controlled everything so that someday he could fix what had been so horribly damaged. Into this world, at just the right moment, he sent his one and only Son.

- Paul David Tripp

Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands

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The Story of the Kingdom of God

- The whole Bible is a love story
- He was in the beginning with God
- Jesus is the Word of God
- Jesus preceded Adam and made Adam
- Adam was deceived to want to become god (Idolatry)
- Jesus was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1)

The Story of the Kingdom of God

- So Adam fell
- God had to implement a plan of redemption
- This plan involved a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)
- Involved The Word being made flesh and dwelling among us (John 1:14)
- Fully man and fully God (John 8:58, John 10:30, John 14:9)
- Jesus is both God and man.

The Story of the Kingdom of God

- Jesus has always been God, but He did not become a human being until He was conceived in Mary
- Jesus became a human being in order to identify with us in our struggles (Hebrews 2:17)
- He could die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins (Philippians 2:5-11).
- He who knew no sin to become sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21)

The Story of the Kingdom of God

- *If any one of these things were untrue, we would have no basis for our beliefs*
- *No Adam = no fall*
- *No fall = no need for a plan of redemption*
- *If Jesus were not born of a virgin, then the Scriptures cannot be reliable.*
- *If the Scriptures are not reliable, then we are of all men most miserable — our faith is in vain and we are dead in our sins.*

The Story of the Kingdom of God

- *The Virgin Birth circumvented the transmission of the sin nature and allowed the eternal God to become a perfect man.*
- *If Jesus had a sin nature, he could not been our redeemer*
- *If Jesus had not died on a cross, he could not have fulfilled prophecy (Deuteronomy 21:22–23 , Galatians 3:13)*
- *If Jesus had not risen from the dead, He'd be like any other man (1 Cor 5:14)*

In the midst of the Garden



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Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” ²And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.

Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Tree of Life

²²Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” ²³therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Trees

- Eating the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil
 - Man questioned God's commandments
 - Man was already like God!
 - Man understood good and evil
 - Man became his own god
 - Man became cursed
- Eating the Tree of Life
 - Gives eternal life
 - You can only eat it if you repent

Trees

- Jesus hung on the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil
 - So He could become the curse
 - So the curse of the Law would be fulfilled
 - Man could once again be like God
 - Man could be able to eat of the Tree of Life
- Jesus is the Tree of Life
 - He gives eternal life
 - You can only eat of Him if you repent

Jesus is Life

- ⁵³So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.

Restoration

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

Restoration

²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

²¹ And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²² he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard.