

## CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

717 North Stapley Drive, Mesa, AZ 85203 Phone: (480) 833-7500

Series:	The Nicene Creed		Pastor/Teacher
Number:	43		Gary L.W. Johnson
Text:	John 17:1-5		
Date:	June 8, 2025 (a.m.)		

### WHO WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON TOGETHER IS WORSHIPED AND GLORIFIED

The language used in this portion of the Nicene Creed strongly emphasizes the inseparability of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Worship is ascribed to all three. Cary notes: “With that emphasis on worship the Creed comes to the point that was always the fundamental basis of the doctrine of the Trinity. As we are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, so we worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as our God, the one Creator of heaven and earth – which means we cannot possibly regard the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as unequal in any way, as if any one of them deserved a lower and lesser worship than the others. And yet neither does Christian faith allow this worship to be given to more than one God. The logic of Christian worship is thus the logic of the Nicene faith. It took a while, but with ancient Christian practices of worship in view, the triumph of Nicene theology looks inevitable in retrospect. It is theology catching up with what Christians have always believed when they worship.”<sup>1</sup>

- I. **WORSHIPED.** Robert Letham points out that, “When the Father is worshiped, so are the Spirit and the Son. Since the Spirit has the same status as the Father and the Son, we worship all three simultaneously. Again, in their mutual indwelling each of the three seeks the glory of the others. There is a revolving circle of glory from like to like. The Son is glorified by the Spirit; the Father is glorified by the Son; again the Son has his glory from the Father; and the Only-begotten thus becomes the glory of the Spirit. . . . In like manner . . . faith completes the circle, and glorifies the Son by means of the Spirit, and the Father by means of the Son. Worship of any of the three is worship of all three and thus worship of the one.”<sup>2</sup> The fact that worship is given to the Son and the Holy Spirit proves that each one is fully God. W. G. T. Shedd long ago wrote: “Religious worship in its various acts is rendered to the Son of God, namely:

Faith: *believe also in me* (John 14:1)

Hope: *blessed are all they that put their trust in him (the Son)* (Ps. 2:12); but *cursed is the man that trusts in man* (Jer. 17:5)

Adoration: *let all the angels of God worship him* (Heb. 1:6); *kiss* [a mark of homage and adoration; 1 Sam. 10:1] *the Son* (Ps. 2:12); *the Father has given all judgment to the Son, that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father* (John 5:23); *at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow* (Phil. 2:9-10)

Invocation of blessing: (a) grace, mercy, and peace are implored from Christ, not less than from the Father; believers are described as those *who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Cor. 1:2; Acts 9:14); Stephen calls upon Christ to receive his spirit at death (7:59); (b) glory and honor are invoked for Christ in connection with the Father *who sits upon the throne* (Rev. 5:14); (c) doxology to Christ (1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:18; Rev. 1:6; 2 Pet. 3:18). Says Athanasius (*Orations* 3.12): *May God and his angel Gabriel, or Michael, grant you would be a new and*

extraordinary sort of prayer. But *God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ grant you* is perfectly agreeable to Scripture.

That the Holy Spirit is fully God, Shedd said: “Because divine worship is rendered to him: in the baptismal formula (Matt. 28:19) and in the apostolic benediction (2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4). In this last passage, the *seven spirits* are the Holy Spirit, who is so called because of the variety of his gifts, because it is the perfect number in the Jewish idea, and because of an allusion to the seven churches addressed. *Glorify God in your body, which is God’s* (1 Cor. 6:20), but it is the Holy Spirit who dwells in the body as his temple (v. 19); *Lord, you are God, who by the mouth of your servant David have said, Why do the heathen rage?* (Acts 4:24-25). But David spoke by the Holy Spirit, so that this act of worship on the part of the disciples terminated on the Holy Spirit. The reason why less is said in Scripture respecting the adoration and worship of the third person than of the others is that in the economy of redemption it is the office of the Spirit to awaken feelings of worship, and naturally, therefore, he appears more as the author than the object of worship. But a person who by an internal operation can awaken feelings of worship is *ipso facto* God.”<sup>3</sup>

- II. **GLORIFIED.** George A. F. Knight in his book *A Biblical Approach to the Doctrine of the Trinity*, writes: “It will be remembered that the one Hebrew word *kabod* serves for the two English ideas of *honour* and *glory*. Originally, the root of this word signified the idea of being heavy. The noun then was used to describe one who was heavy with possessions. Consequently it could mean *riches*. But if a man were rich, then he received honour. Thus the noun came to mean *honour* as well. If a man receives honour, he receives glory. Again, the same growth in meaning was made when the word was applied to God. The *garment of the living God* (Ps. 104:2) is none other than God’s glory. *The heavens declare the glory of God* (Ps. 19:1). They are *the likeness as the appearance of the fullness of glory* not yet revealed.”<sup>4</sup> The verb *doxazō*, as Silva points out, “is used in a corresponding sense, esp. in John, where it usually means *to make or show to be glorious, share in God’s glory, exalt with heavenly glory*, or the like (John 7:39; 11:4; 12:16; 13:31-32; 17:1, 4-5).”<sup>5</sup> Thomas Manton, one of the great Puritan preachers, asks, What does it mean to glorify God? “To acknowledge his excellency upon all occasions: Ps. 1:23, *he that offereth praise glorifieth me*. Praising him for his excellencies, and declaring the glory of his attributes and works, is one way of glorifying him. God’s glorifying of us is effective and creative, ours declarative and manifestive: *He calleth the things that are not as though they were*; but we do no more but say things to be what they are, and that far below what they are. We declare God to be what he is, and are a kind of witnesses to his glory. He is the efficient and sole cause of all the good that we have and are, and bestows something upon us which was not before. This declaring the glory of God is expressed by two words, *praise* and *blessing*: Ps. 145:10, *All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord: thy saints shall bless thee*. Praise referreth to his excellency, blessing to his benefits; both must be done seriously and frequently, and with a deep impression of his goodness and excellency upon our hearts. Every address we make to God tendeth to this, that God may have his due praise understandingly and affectionately ascribed to him. Repentance and broken-hearted confession giveth him the praise of his justice; the exercise of faith, and running for refuge to the grace of the gospel, doth glorify his mercy; thanksgiving for benefits received, his benignity and goodness petitioning for grace, his holiness.”<sup>6</sup>

**CONCLUSION:** Cary concludes by saying, “With this emphasis on worship the Creed comes to the point that was always the fundamental basis of the doctrine of the Trinity. As we are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, so we worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as our God, the one Creator of heaven and earth – which means we cannot possibly regard the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as unequal in any way, as if any one of them deserved a lower and lesser worship than the others. And yet neither does Christian faith allow this worship to be given to more than one God. The logic of

Christian worship is thus the logic of the Nicene faith. It took a while, but with ancient Christian practices of worship in view, the triumph of Nicene theology looks inevitable in retrospect. It is theology catching up with what Christians have always believed when they worship.”<sup>7</sup>

## ENDNOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> Phillip Cary, *The Nicene Creed: An Introduction* (Lexham Press, 2023), p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (P&R, 2004), p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, Third Edition ed. A. W. Gomes (P&R, 2003), pp. 268-270.

<sup>4</sup> Knight, p. 38.

<sup>5</sup> Moises Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis I* (Zondervan, 2014), p. 765.

<sup>6</sup> *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton X* (rpt. Maranatha Publications, 1978), p. 174.

<sup>7</sup> Cary, op. cit., p. 190.