

The Life of Athanasius

(290-373 A.D.)

Athanasius, which means "immortal," was born in Egypt, in the city of Alexandria, in the year 295 A.D. When he was an adolescent, he studied law and theology. He retired from that for a time into a desert to live a solitary life, and he made friends with some monks in the desert; after which, he returned to the city, and decided to dedicate his life totally to the service of God.

It was in the time of Arius, he was chosen to be the secretary of Alexander. Arius confused the faithful with his heretical interpretation that Christ was not God in his nature.

In order to consider this question, there was held a council (one of the first ecumenical ones) in Nicene, a city in Asia Minor. Athanasius was then a deacon, and accompanied Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, to the council, and by his doctrine, genius, and courage, he defended the universal truth of God and refuted the heretics and Arius in these debates.

The Creed of Athanasius

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholic Faith is this:

That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be both God and Lord, so we are forbidden by the Catholic Religion, to say, there be three Gods, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father [and of the Son], neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is

greater, or less than another; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.

So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man.

God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man, of the Substance of His Mother, born in the world; Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul in human flesh subsisting; Equal to the Father, as touching His Godhead; and inferior to the Father, as touching His Manhood.

Who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ; One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God; One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person.

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ. Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

At whose coming all men shall rise with their bodies and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil into everlasting fire. This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

Amen.

Clarifications by David Cox

We should understand that in this same time that the Christian Church was attacked by the false doctrines of Arius on the nature of Jesus Christ, the church was attacked on the issue of the local, temporal authority of the church, specifically the human authority of the Pope set as divine authority. Even though Alexander and Athanasius were very clear on the nature of Christ, they did not see the issue of the Catholic Church's presumption of God's authority, which is the old heresy of the Nicolitians in Rev 2:6, 15, which is men who wish to enslave and dominate the people of God.

Also by this time the false idea of salvation by works had entered. We should be very clear here that the Bible teaches that works are a correct and normal (essential) outworking of true salvation, and the lack of good works in the life of the believer is an indication that something is very wrong in his understanding and Christian faith (probably he is not saved).

But the Bible teaches that true faith produces works, and good works will never produce true faith (Titus 3:5; Eph 2:8-9).

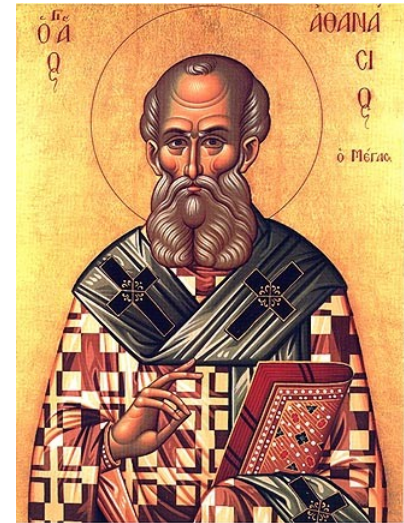
Even though we see these errors in these men, and the "Catholic Church" that they refer to is not all who are truly saved, but it is an identification of a local, human church ("Apostolic Roman "Catholic Church") which has gone further and further into error from this time. That being the case, the understanding of Athanasius and Alexander on the Trinity against Arius is very accurate to the Bible.

Athanasius Creed

There is one God in Three Persons

290-373 A.D.

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Athanasius was a deacon in the church of Alexander, bishop of Alexandria. He attended the Nicene Council. Afterwards he was the bishop of Alexandria after Alexander died in 328 A.D. He was persecuted for his position of defending the Trinity and the Deity of Jesus Christ. His declarations on the Trinity are very clear, and very far reaching. Even though these declarations are not Scripture, they are very well worded and studied to communicate the Bible truths.