

# Sermon for A Year with the Catechism: The First Article of the Apostles' Creed

**Date:** November 28, 2021

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

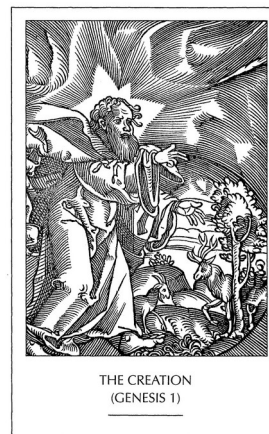
**Old Testament:** Genesis 1:1-2:3

**Epistle Reading:** Romans 8:18-25

**Gospel Reading:** John 1:1-5

**Sermon Text:** Genesis 1:1-2:3

**Sermon Title:** The First Article of the Apostles' Creed



**Introit:** Psalm 19:2-6; Antiphon: Psalm 19:1

## Hymns:

LSB 903 – This Is the Day the Lord Has Made  
LSB 527 – O Savior, Precious Savior  
LSB 582 – God's Word Is Our Great Heritage  
LSB 817 – Earth and All Stars  
LSB 923 – Almighty Father, Bless the Word

## Liturgy:

Divine Service I, p. 151

## Songs:

Church (Take Me Back) - Cochren  
A Shield About Me  
Brothers Sisters Let Us Gladly – Koine  
Broken Things - Matthew West  
Grace Like Rain - Todd Agnew

## Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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**Text: Old Testament: Genesis 1:1—2:3 (*Excerpts*)**

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

...

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

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Grace to you and peace, in Jesus' name. Amen.

The first article, or first part, of the Apostles' Creed is:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth.

In that short sentence there is a lot we should learn. Martin Luther explains this first article this way:

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.

All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.<sup>1</sup>

This article is a clear extension of the First Commandment. How does Martin Luther teach us the First Commandment?

You shall have no other gods.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.<sup>2</sup>

There is only one God and He alone made and maintains all things. In the Bible the creation record begins with:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.<sup>3</sup>

Did you notice that there is no explanation about which god, or what god? It is simply God. It is simply God because there is only one God. He created everything. Not just Heaven, but sky, space, the inter-galactic-void and Heaven, as

1 Luther's Small Catechism

2 Luther's Small Catechism

3 Genesis 1:1

well as not just planet Earth, but earth as in all dirt, dust, rocks and sand. God created Heaven, Earth, and everything in between. In other words:

Everything came into existence through Him. Not one thing that exists was made without Him.<sup>4</sup>

Why is this important? Because the first three chapters of the Bible are the most important in all of Scripture. It is important to realize that these chapters are a real record of real events as they actually occurred. It was six literal 24-hour days and one additional day without work. Adam and Eve are real people, who ate real fruit, forbidden by God to eat. Satan is a real being that tempted them to rebel against God. Without a literal understanding of Genesis 1-3 the rest of the Bible is meaningless and worthless.

Don't take my word for it. Look at what Jesus said. Look at the tens of references the beginning of Genesis, found in the New Testament. Jesus and His disciples proclaimed Genesis to be fact.<sup>5</sup> If Jesus thought Genesis was true, we would be fools to think differently.

That is because without Genesis 1-3 being real the promise of your Savior is also not real, and in fact you have no need for a Savior because there is nothing from which to save you. If the Universe is now functioning as God created it to function then everything is just as God wants it to be, so why does God need to save us from it?

If however sin, brought by Adam and Eve, corrupted all of creation,<sup>6</sup> then there is something from which to save us, and that something is called sin and sin's affect. It is here, in the first three chapters of the Bible, that sin is defined. Without that definition we cannot fully understand what sin is, what sin does, or why we need to be saved from it.

Sin is not just the bad stuff we do. Sin is everything that falls short of God's definition of perfection. Not our definition of perfection, but God's. God's standards are much higher than ours. Sin is not just the bad things we do. Sin is a stain that permeates every aspect of creation from the largest planet to the smallest grain of sand. It affects our heart and our soul. It cuts us off from God and God's love and care. Sin makes us dead to God.<sup>7</sup> Sin is a sickness from which we cannot escape. It is everywhere and in everything. Sin causes people to gossip and tell lies. Sin causes people to think and act like the Church is a joke. Sin causes every

4 John 1:3

5 For a non-exhaustive list see: <http://creation.com/genesis-new-testament>

6 Romans 8:22-23

7 Genesis 2:17

unpleasant thing on Earth. Sin even causes that stink in your rotting garbage. Sin causes all of the mess in the world. Sin causes pain. Sin causes sickness. Sin causes loneliness, and sin causes death. Death of bugs, death of birds, and death of people. Sin is the sickness from which none of us can escape.

So understanding what sin is I'll now ask you two questions:

Did mankind bring sin into the world?

Or

Did sin bring mankind into the world?

Only one of those can be true. If amoebas became humans through countless misfires and mistakes in the genetic code, as cells divided, and those mistakes and misfire, (which occur when the cell fail to operate perfectly, the way God designed it,) eventually brought people into existence then sin brought mankind into the world, and you are nothing more than a walking talking blob of amoeba cancer.

If that is true you need to ask some other more difficult questions, like:

- When did humans become human enough to have a soul that needs to be saved?  
Did: Piltdown Man, Nebraska Man, or Neanderthal Man need to be saved?<sup>8</sup>)  
When did the soul evolve?
- When did humans become human enough that God would command them to worship Him?
- Where would we find the figurative-first Adam and Eve? The first male and female that were actually human and not just advanced apes?
- Do animals have souls too, and did Jesus die for them and their sins, if so where does the Bible record that?

You can see that holding a view that people evolved from bugs to Bubba, from aphid to Adam, from earwig to Eve, becomes a very complex matter if you still believe in a heavenly Father who sent His Son to save the world from sin, and has send His Holy Spirit to keep you in the one true Christian faith that leads to eternal life. The truth is, if you believe in macro-evolution, (a creature turns into another creature over time,) then you cannot believe Jesus has saved you. In fact there is nothing from which to save you. If you believe in a god at all, it would have be a god who made all that is, just the way it is now, and it is all working the way He wants it to.

8 These three were selected because all three, though still often taught as "missing links" between apes and man have all been clearly confirmed as hoaxes or outright lies for, at least, well over 50 years. Information which is readily available even on sites like Wikipedia.

If, however, mankind brought sin into the world, and all of creation is now corrupted, stained, and broken because of sin and sin's affect, like the Bible describes, then we do need a Savior who will come and make all things new.<sup>9</sup> Then there really is a Heaven and a Hell, and those who put their trust in God, and God's promises, will alone be saved. All others will not.

The first article of the Apostles' Creed is short and it doesn't say much at first glance, but already it has forced you to take a stand. It has forced you to take a side. To which religion do you hold? Do you believe the Bible or do you believe evolution? They cannot coexist. This does not pit faith against science. Good science that seeks to understand God's creation does not start with the assumption that God is fake, or that God does not exist. It starts with the assumption that God is real, God is right, and God make the rules. Any hypothesis, proof, or test that fails to accommodate those assumption must be wrong because we confess and believe:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth.

That makes us God's creation. In fact it make us much more than that. God created all things: the dirt and water, then sky and space, planets and plant, animals, birds, fish and flowers. Then, when everything was complete and just the way He wanted it, He made us: people. Everything else was put in place for us to enjoy. The entire Universe was made for us, for our pleasure, and for our purpose. It is all ours to steward and enjoy. We are the pinnacle of God's creation. We are the top, the most important. Nothing is more precious to God, in all that He has made, than us. Since everything was given to us, when we sinned we messed everything up. We brought the curse of sin onto everything. That is why the world is the mess that it is.

Jesus is the One who was promised to come and fix our mess.<sup>10</sup> Jesus did not come to save worms, wallabies, or whales. He came to save us. The new heavens and new earth will be made for us too. Not earthworms, emus, or elephants. Jesus came to save you, because you are the reason for everything else in Heaven and on Earth.

More than that the First Article of the Apostles' Creed teaches us that all things come from God and nothing goes from us to God. We have nothing to give Him because He made all things for us. We are the receivers only. We are wholly dependent on God for all things. Sin is our attempt to become independent from

9 Revelation 21:5

10 Genesis 3:15

God, and in that effort we attempt to take the place of God; even usurp God's throne and try to unseat Him. Someone else tried to do that once and things did not go so well for him. His name is Lucifer and trust me you don't want to take the same path he did.

The first article of the Apostles' Creed teaches us that God is God and we are His people. It teaches us what sin really is and that God has saved us from sin and sin's affect. How He did that is found in the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed which we will explore next week, but for right now understand that God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth, saved you through Jesus Christ His Son.

So in Jesus' name we give Him thanks and praise.

Amen.

**Proclaim God's Word,  
Encourage one another in faith,  
Witness to God's love and  
Serve all people**

