



WHY DO WE BELIEVE *THAT* ?

Introduction to Reformed Theology

Education Year 2024-2025

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Why Do We Believe That? - Class 1

SYLLABUS

- Summary
 - New Members' Class, but more in-depth
 - Class characteristics:
 - Theological
 - Confessional
 - Historical
 - Polemical
 - Distinctives
- Study Material
 - God's Word



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SYLLABUS

- Study Material
 - God's Word
 - Confessions: *Three Forms of Unity*
 - Other material as needed

- Nature of the class

- Schedule

- Other general resources:
 - Louis Berkhof's *Manual of Christian Doctrine*
 - Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith* or *Pilgrim Theology*



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DISTINCTIVES

- What are our distinctives? Who are we as a church?
 - God's Word is primary
 - Christ-centered / Redemptive-historical preaching
 - Simple and reverent worship
 - Confessional
 - Includes specific doctrinal formulations

“Now when you start talking about doctrine it sounds like just empty talk. But Christian doctrine is never a matter of abstracts or ideas, but realities.”¹

Harold L. Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls: Cultivating a Pastor's Heart* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 126.



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CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS

- “No creed but Christ.”
- Biblical Support for Creeds:
 - Old Testament:
 - Deut 6:4 – “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.”
 - New Testament
 - Matt 16:16 – “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”
 - 1 Cor 15:3-4 – “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”



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CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS

- Biblical Support for Creeds:
 - New Testament
 - 1 Tim 3:16 – “And confessedly great is the mystery of piety: who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.”
 - Jude 3-4 – “I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ...”



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CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS

- Usefulness of Creeds and Confessions
 - Instruction in the faith
 - Personal
 - Corporate – catechetical preaching, catechism classes
 - New Converts
 - Guard the church from error
 - Unity of the church



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CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS

- Ecumenical Creeds
 - Apostles' Creed
 - Nicene Creed
 - aka *Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed*
 - *Filioque* Clause – “and the Son”
 - Athanasian Creed



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CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS

- Reformed & Presbyterian Confessions
 - Three Forms of Unity
 - The Belgic Confession of Faith – 1561
 - The Heidelberg Catechism – 1563
 - The Canons of Dort – 1618-1619
 - The Westminster Standards – 1640s
 - The Westminster Confession of Faith
 - The Westminster Larger Catechism
 - The Westminster Shorter Catechism



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NEXT CLASS

- NO meeting next week
 - Meeting of Classis Pacific Northwest in Nampa, Idaho
- Reconvene on **September 18**
- **To Prepare:**
 - Read “Introduction to the Creeds and Confessions”



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