

THE CREEDS OF CHRISTENDOM ON THE CONSUMMATION

This chart cites the eschatological portions of some of the great creeds of Christendom, especially those in the Reformed tradition. Together, they show that amillennialism has indeed been the traditional eschatology of the universal Christian Church. We post them here in hopes that all God's people will consider it afresh and, if necessary, come home.

1. The Apostle's Creed (Fourth Century)

Christ . . . sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

2. The Nicene Creed (AD 381)

And Christ shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; whose Kingdom shall have no end.

3. The Athanasian Creed (Sixth Century)

He ascended into heaven, (and) sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; at whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

4. The Augsburg Confession (Lutheran, AD 1530)

(We) teach that at the Consummation of the World Christ will appear for judgment, and will raise up all the dead; He will give to the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys, but ungodly men and the devils He will condemn to be tormented without end.

(We) condemn (those) who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed.

5. Belgic Confession (Reformed, AD 1561)

Finally we believe, according to God's Word, that when the time appointed by the Lord is come (which is unknown to all creatures) and the number of the elect is complete, our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven, bodily and visibly, as he ascended, with great glory and majesty, to declare himself the judge of the living and the dead. He will burn this old world in fire and flame in order to cleanse it.

Then all human creatures will appear in person before the great Judge—men, women, and children, who have lived from the beginning until the end of the world.

They will be summoned there by the voice of the archangel and by the sound of the divine trumpet.

For all those who died before that time will be raised from the earth, their spirits being joined and united with their own bodies in which they lived. And as for those who are still alive, they will not die like the others, but will be changed in the twinkling of an eye from corruptible to incorruptible.

Then the books (that is, the consciences) will be opened, and the dead will be judged according to the things they did in the world, whether good or evil. Indeed, all people will give account of all the idle words they have spoken, which the world regards as only playing games. And then the secrets and hypocrisies of men will be publicly uncovered in the sight of all.

Therefore, with good reason the thought of this judgment is horrible and dreadful to wicked and evil people. But it is very pleasant and a great comfort to the righteous and elect, since their total redemption will then be accomplished. They will then receive the fruits of their labor and of the trouble they have suffered; their innocence will be openly recognized by all; and they will see the terrible vengeance that God will bring on the evil ones who tyrannized, oppressed, and tormented them in this world.

The evil ones will be convicted by the witness of their own consciences, and shall be made immortal—but only to be tormented in the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

In contrast, the faithful and elect will be crowned with glory and honor. The Son of God will confess their names before God his Father and the holy and elect angels; all tears will be wiped from their eyes; and their cause—at present condemned as heretical and evil by many judges and civil officers—will be acknowledged as the cause of the Son of God.

And as a gracious reward the Lord will make them possess a glory such as the heart of man could never imagine.

So we look forward to that great day with longing in order to enjoy fully the promises of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

6. The Heidelberg Catechism (Reformed, AD 1563)

Question: What comfort is it to thee that (it is written in the Apostle's Creed), "Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead"?

Answer: That in all my sorrows and persecutions, with uplifted head I look for the very same Person, who before offered himself for my sake, to the tribunal of God, and has removed all curse from me, to come as Judge from heaven: who shall cast all his and my enemies into everlasting

condemnation, but shall translate me with all his chosen ones to himself, into heavenly joys and glory.

7. The Thirty-Nine Articles (Church of England, AD 1563)

Christ ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all Men at the last day.

8. Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) and the London Baptist Confession (1689)

Chapter XXXIII Of the Last Judgment

I. God has appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

II. The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of His justice, in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and refreshing, which shall come from the presence of the Lord; but the wicked who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

III. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin; and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity: so will He have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen."

9. Methodist Articles of Religion (1784)

Article 3: Of the Resurrection of Christ

Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the Last Day.

10. New Hampshire Baptist Confession (AD 1833)

We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the Last Day Christ will descend from heaven and raise the dead from the grave to final (reward and) retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

11. Baptist Faith and Message (Southern Baptist, AD 1963)

God, in His own time and His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised, and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in

their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in heaven with the Lord.

12. National Association of Evangelicals

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.