

Creeds of the Kehillah ~ Part 36

The Nicene Creed ~ Part 22

In our last post, we continued to explore the **Nicene Creed**. In this post, we continue to dig into the third article of faith, keeping with the phrase **with the Father and the Son, He is worshiped and glorified** in the **Nicene Creed**.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son, He is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON

Wherever the **Son's** divinity was questioned, it followed that the divinity of the **Ruach** was questioned. As a result of the **Arian** controversy, the **Council of Nicaea** in 325CE worked out the relationship between the **Father** and the **Son**, confessing its belief that the **Son** is *homoousios* (the same in being) with the **Father**. The third article of the **Nicene Creed** of 325CE also confessed a belief in the **Ruach HaKodesh** but did not expand on what that belief entailed concerning the **Father** and the **Son**. It simply said, And *we believe in the Holy Spirit*, followed by a condemnation of the **Arians**. It is also true that, while the **Nicene Creed** may have settled in principle the debate regarding the **Son** being of the same substance of the **Father**, it still took another fifty years before the **kehillah** definitively settled the issue. The relationship of the **Son** to the **Father** was being debated during this time. Still, the ancient **kehillah** writers and the heretics also realized that if the **Ruach** was in any way denigrated, this too affected the **Son**: as goes the **Ruach**, so goes the **Son**. The logic was inescapable. Thus, at the **Second Ecumenical Council** at **Constantinople** in 381CE and again at the **Council of Rome** in 382CE in the West, the full divinity of the **Ruach** too was confessed and included in the **Creed** formulated for the **Council at Constantinople** in 381CE, once the full implications of what had been decided at **Nicaea** had been debated.

There was no inclusion of the *homoousios* in its confession of the **Ruach**, however. Such an omission may reflect the unwillingness of the period evidenced in such writers as **Athanasius**. Still, Basil, who said to *worshiped and glorified*, was as close as they came to say that the **Ruach HaKodesh** was God. **Gregory of Nazianzus** also reflects the ambivalence prevalent among some at that time when he remarked, "*To be only a little in error about the Ruach HaKodesh is to be orthodox.*" Such caution of not using *homoousios* in its confession of the **Ruach** may also stem from the attempts at the time to be conciliatory to the bishops who were allies against the **Arians** but followed the teaching of **Macedonius** and were present at the **Council of Constantinople**. There may have also been the realization that not everyone among even the orthodox, had come around yet fully to the idea of the **Ruach HaKodesh** being consubstantial with the **Father** and the **Son**. But this would not remain so for long. The full divinity and consubstantiality of the **Ruach** with the **Father** and the **Son** was soon the consensual teaching of the entire **kehillah**.

HE IS WORSHIPED AND GLORIFIED

The ancient **kehillah's** worship and glorification of the **Ruach HaKodesh** is perhaps the most precise witness to its understanding of the role of the **Ruach** in the divine economy before such an understanding became enunciated in the **Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed**. The worship life of the **kehillah** not only informed the **kehillah's** theology; it also expressed that theology in a way more often caught than taught. The technical way of referring to this is *lex orandi et lex credendi* (the rule of prayer expresses the rule of

faith). Such a rule is already evident in the commission of **Yeshua** to baptize in the name of the **Father, Son,** and **Ruach HaKodesh**. While not the only formula used in the **Brit Hadashah** period, this formula for baptism became the most common and then the only one used in the subsequent life of the **kehillah**. The benediction of **Sha'ul** in his second letter to the **Corinthians** includes the **Ruach** in the same breath with the **Father** and the **Son**. The enlivening and unifying role of the **Ruach** in the life of the early **kehillah** and its worship is clearly evident throughout the pages of the **Brit Hadashah** and the post-apostolic documents of the second century. References to the **Ruach's** work and activity, especially in worship, continue in the writings leading up to the fourth century and beyond. ¹

In my next post, we continue to dig into the third article of the **Nicene Creed: We Believe in The Holy Spirit**.

¹ Elowsky, J. C., & Oden, T. C. (Eds.). (2009). **We Believe in the Holy Spirit** (Vol. 4, pp 225-246).