

The Creed Part II

The Creed is broken into four major statements: 1) I believe in one God; 2) I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ; 3) I believe in the Holy Spirit; and 4) I believe in the Church. The first three define the Faith in the Blessed Trinity, and the fourth statement summarizes other doctrines that professing Catholics must believe. The first statement, "I believe in one God," addresses the first person of the blessed Trinity.

The current translation begins with "I believe in one God." The Jewish philosopher Maimonides said that 'Christianity is a peculiarly monotheistic religion.' It is peculiar because we believe in the Three Persons in One God. For the Jew, Monotheism meant that there was only one indivisible God. Christians profess that God is indivisible, and yet there are Three Persons called the Holy Trinity. The main force of this belief for Jews was against the "other gods" or, in Greek, "daemons"—that is the local gods in and outside of Palestine where the Hebrews lived. The Hebrews had their own "only God" (*adonai echad*) and did not admit to the validity of worshipping any other gods, even if they did exist. To the Hebrews, they were alien gods, and the God of the Hebrews was the one, true God who is above all other gods.

Maimonides says in his work, *Laws Concerning Idolatry and its Customs*: "It is not enough to say: "Adonai" revealed Himself to us at Sinai and told us that there are no other deities or forces that are partner to His being and His rulership of the universe. So I know that it is so. If He said so, that's enough for me: the logic of this truth is irrelevant." Maimonides is saying that God's no other gods, and that is all one needs. The Second Commandment obligates the Jew that his mind, not only his convictions, should negate the possibility of other gods. He must not only accept that this is so, but also comprehend that, rationally, it cannot be otherwise." This is not to say that one can comprehend God. God is beyond human comprehension.

There is an insistent problem that appears frequently in the Hebrew Scriptures: That God, or God's messengers (angels), appear and have discourse with humans. In these passages, the angels are often addressed by human beings as God would be addressed. Also, God's spirit inspired the prophets and descended upon them, endowing them with a 'portion' of God's Spirit. Thus God, could be on His holy mountain and at the same time, appear to a prophet and possess him, placing him in a trance-like state called the prophetic state. Thus, the idea of an ever and universally present God became part of the Jewish Faith.

The many presences of God that we see in the Hebrew Scriptures make room for the Christian belief in the Holy Trinity. This is explained more clearly in Jesus' statements in the Gospels (especially the Gospel of John) and also in the writings of the Apostles and sub-apostolic writers. We will learn more about this in future articles.