

# “Why Human Creeds Cannot Be Truth”

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**Text:** John 8:30-32

**Theme:** To stress that human creeds cannot be the body of saving truth that Jesus referred to in John 8:32.

## **Introduction:**

1. It is a fact that most “Christian” religious organizations are governed by *creeds* or *statements of faith* sanctioned by their official governing bodies.
  - a. They have many different names and styles
    - 1) Confession of Faith
    - 2) Discipline
    - 3) Covenant
    - 4) Creed, e.g., The Apostles’ Creed
  - b. These change from time to time to reflect the thinking of the current leadership.
2. Even when bodies do not have officially written creeds, it is still possible that they have unwritten creeds which effectively end up amounting to the same thing.
  - a. These creeds often reflect the thinking of some prominent individual in the organization.
  - b. These creeds are much more volatile than the written creeds, by their very nature.

## **Discussion: The problem of human creeds**

- I. Their nature
  - A. Indeed creeds state many things that are true

1. Nearly all of them give recognition to Jesus being the Son of God.
  2. But just stating truth does not make them equivalent to the body of saving truth.
- B. Creeds generally state many things that are not true.
1. Many of them assign to baptism a position of insignificance or irrelevance in God's plan for saving man.
  2. Obviously, to state that which is untrue surely means that the creed is not the body of saving truth.
- C. Churches take great liberty with their creeds.
1. When an organization assumes it has a right to have a creed, it naturally follows that it assumes it can pretty much let that creed say about anything.
    - a. Ultimately the creeds authorize that which God has not authorized.
    - b. They allow what God has condemned.
    - c. Perhaps they may even condemn what God has allowed.
  2. Because there is insufficient concern for principles of Biblical interpretation, the governing bodies make Christianity be whatever they want it to be.
    - a. As regards the church, their creeds make the church be whatever they want it to be.
    - b. This is brought about by decrees inserted into the creeds regarding the organization, government, beliefs and practices of the particular organizations.
  3. Basically, all this is idolatry.
    - a. Cf. to Hindu idols. Those gods are made according to what the people think God should be like.
    - b. *Christian creeds* are efforts on the part of people who want to make God and his church according to their own fashion.
      - 1) Yes, they say they do not believe in idolatry. But they carve an imaginary image of God that is not revealed in scripture. They adorn them in many different ways.

- 2) They say they believe in the church Christ built and that they are in fact the various parts of it, but they change the church into something totally different from what is indicated in the Bible.
4. Sadly, there are those from within the Lord's church today who are not concerned about the creeds, especially of the Protestant denominations.
  - a. They embrace those organizations along with their creeds.
  - b. They would have the church of Lord become like one of them.
  - c. They are like the Israelites of old who wanted to be like the nations round about them and built for themselves altars in every corner of Jerusalem.

## II. The human creeds cannot be truth

### A. Because of their origin

1. The earliest creeds came into existence as people began to take different positions on various religious issues.
  - a. Such as the nature of Christ
  - b. Such as the matter of sin
2. Most notably, the Catholic Church developed a system of belief rooted in the theory of the living voice of the living church giving it a right to decide all such matters.
3. Then there was a split between the Eastern and Western forces of the Church.
4. Aside from some lesser known efforts, the Protestant Reformation produced the next wave of creeds.
  - a. The Protestants were interested in reforming the Church.
    - 1) However, the powers of leadership were too strong to have much impact.
    - 2) The Catholic Church continues today to speak for most of the people who consider themselves of the Christian faith.

- b. When the various Protestant leaders led groups of people away from the Catholic Church, they tended to state their beliefs in such ways as to distinguish themselves from one another.
  - 1) Though there was (and is) some overlapping in the creeds of these organizations, there is usually some few items that are different enough from the others as to give some definition to the body.
  - 2) In the final analysis, it is the creeds that give rise to and continuance of the various denominations. Accepting the belief and practice system of a particular group, as set forth in its creed, is what makes a person part of that denomination.
    - a) Sometimes, we are asked what makes us different from some other group.
    - b) It is precisely our attitude toward the word of God. We refuse to write creeds. The Bible alone is sufficient.
- 5. Generally, the creeds come into existence from the premise that what God's word does not specifically condemn, it accepts or at least tolerates. It is an issue of hermeneutics.
  - a. So, various ones get together and decide what seems to be best at any given time in history.
  - b. But they have become more bold. Today, many denominations are taking great strides with their belief systems.
    - 1) They sometimes do accept what the Bible specifically condemns (e.g. the homosexual issues and sexuality in general).
    - 2) Not a few are explicitly questioning even the authenticity and authority of the Bible itself.
- 6. Thus we conclude that the creeds cannot be truth because in the first place their origin is human.
  - a. Human wisdom is insufficient.
  - b. Je. 10:23

- B. Because of their authorship.
1. Somewhat akin to the previous point.
  2. These are written by men (and women nowadays!)
    - a. Thus, it is so much “Christian philosophy.”
    - b. These people tap into their religious experiences and notions and try to decide within the realm of human reasoning how things out to be.
    - c. Official groups within the various bodies come together at periodic times to reaffirm and/or revise their positions, beliefs and practices.
  3. Usually, there is some kind of voting procedure that determines the outcome of this process.
    - a. Whether an organization will ordain women preachers, or practicing homosexuals as preachers, is determined by the vote of those present rather than by what the Bible says.
    - b. If enough of the group opposes what the Bible says on a thing, that can become a part of the creed system of that organization, the Bible notwithstanding.
    - c. Over a period of time, the creed less and less resembles the Bible.
  4. Now they say that they are merely stating in the language of the common man the viewpoints of the Bible in ways that are relevant to the times.
    - a. But people in these organizations are judged to be faithful or unfaithful based upon the teachings of the creeds.
    - b. Ga.□:8,9 - *Mormonism Exposed*, G.B. Hancock
      - 1) If the creeds state something that the Bible already teaches, there is no need for the creed.
      - 2) If it states something contrary to God’s word, condemnation is promised.
- C. Because of their instability
1. The creeds of men are forever changing.
    - a. Truth, by its very nature, is unchangeable, else were it not truth.

- b. Therefore, human creeds cannot be truth.
- 2. Previously, most all held that it was wrong for there to be women preachers.
  - a. But it is becoming more commonplace among the denominations.
  - b. So, the creeds can never be looked to as truth, even when they state some true things.
- 3. Any examination of the modern creeds show their great change from previous versions.
- D. Because of their divisiveness
  - 1. What makes a particular denomination that denomination?
    - a. Is it not their loyalty to their creed?
      - 1) A Baptist cannot be a Methodist because a Methodist does not accept Baptist doctrine.
      - 2) This is defined by the creed book rather than the Bible.
    - b. They may hold a joint service or program from time to time (maybe even with some of our people participating!) but they remain separated from each other.
      - 1) Because they cannot accept each other's creed.
      - 2) A Presbyterian will not want to be known as a Pentecostal.
- E. Because of their inability to endure
  - 1. An human creed cannot withstand the test of time.
    - a. This is why they are in a constant state of flux as mentioned previously.
    - b. Man is hardly capable of handling the present circumstances, much less the future.
  - 2. They will be subjected to change, and they will come and go.
    - a. Many of the denominations in existence today will not be in existence 100 years from now.
    - b. Even if they are, they will look very different from what they look like today.
- c. So, in effect, they have not continued (opt. the Catholic Church emanated from the true church, but

one would not say today that the Catholic Church and the church of Christ are the same.

- F. Because of their inability to save
  - 1. Ga.□:6,7 - the human creeds of the 1st century were unable to save.
  - 2. Mt.□5:9
  - 3. Re.□2:18,19
- G. Because of their lack of credibility
  - 1. Since their origin is human, since their authorship is that of man, since they are ever changing, since they are divisive by their very nature, since they cannot endure, since they cannot save they cannot be regarded as credible.
  - 2. They thus cannot be said to be the body of saving truth talked about by the Lord.

### III. Only God's word is truth

- A. Because of its origin
  - 1. The Bible is unmistakably clear in its claim to be of the mind of God.
    - a. The Lord said - 219 times
    - b. God spake - 203
    - c. The word of the Lord - 255 times
    - d. Jesus said or spake unto them - 68 times
    - e. Etc.
  - 2. IITo.□:9-13
- B. Because of its authorship
  - 1. The writers of the Bible, though human, were divinely inspired of the Holy Spirit.
    - a. The Old Testament
      - 1) IIBe.□:20,21
      - 2) IICi.□:16,17
    - b. The New Testament
      - 1) Jo.□6:7,13; 14:26
      - 2) Ga.□:11,12
    - c. Jo.□7:20,21 - Jesus prayed concerning those who would believe in him through their (divinely inspired) word.
- C. Because of its stability
  - 1. It does not change, nor does it ever have to.
  - 2. It is timeless.
    - a. Mt.□4:35

- b. Jo. 2:48
- D. Because of its ability to unite
  - 1. Ps. 33:1
  - 2. Jesus prayed for unity, Jo. 7:20,21
    - a. Unity comes through their inspired word.
    - b. ICo. 1:10
- E. Because it is enduring
  - 1. IPe. 2:22-25
  - 2. Is. 40:8
- F. Because it can save
  - 1. Jo. 3:63
  - 2. Ro. 1:16
  - 3. ICo. 5:1-4
- G. Because it is credible
  - 1. Because of its origin, because of its authorship, because of its stability, because of its ability to unite, because of its enduring characteristics, because it is able to save, it is credible.
  - 2. Jo. 3:24

### **Conclusion:**

- 1. Those who produce creeds feign belief in God and Christ.
- 2. They will even give lip service that Christ is Lord. But,
  - a. Lu. 6:46
  - b. Mt. 21
- 3. IPe. 4:11

### **Invitation:**