

Lesson 4
Confessional Orthodoxy: How the Church Speaks the Truth in Love

Review

I. What is confessional orthodoxy?

A. Confessionalism

B. Orthodoxy

II. The history of confessional orthodoxy (begins with Jerusalem Council, c. AD 49)

2nd cent.	The Old Roman Creed, a baptismal creed used in Rome. Develops into the Apostles' Creed .
325-787	<i>The Ecumenical Church Councils</i>
	325 <i>Council of Nicea</i> issued the original Nicene creed, rejecting Arianism (Christ is a created being), and affirming that Christ is fully divine, one in being (<i>homoousios</i>) with the Father.
	381 Council of Constantinople issued the Constantinopolitan Creed, later called the Nicene Creed , affirming that the Spirit is divine.
	451 Council of Chalcedon issued the Definition of Chalcedon , affirming that Christ has two natures in one person.
1054	<i>Great Schism</i> East-west split ends possibility of ecumenical councils.
1517	Martin Luther posted his <i>Ninety-Five Theses</i> to the door of Wittenburg Castle, precipitating the <i>Reformation</i> . Reformation creeds include Augsburg Confession (1530), Belgic Confession (1561), Heidelberg Catechism (1563) Second Helvetic Confession (1566) by Heinrich Bullinger in Zurich. Written after Trent. <i>Translated into Dutch, English, Polish, Italian, Magyar, Turkish and Arabic.</i>
1618-19	Canons of Dordt (1618-19) issued in response to teaching of Jacob Arminius.
1644-48	Westminster Assembly of Divines, issued the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), The Larger Catechism (1648) and The Shorter Catechism (1647). London Baptist Confession (1689).

III. The “creedal imperative” (objection: “No creed but Christ!”)

A. Confessional orthodoxy is an implication of the Gospel

1) Acts 15

2) 1 Tim. 3:15 (the church is the pillar & ground of the truth)

3) All churches have a creed (implicitly or explicitly)

B. Confessional orthodoxy is a means of maintaining unity

C. Confessional orthodoxy is a means of doctrinal accountability

D. Confessional orthodoxy is a means of practical discipleship

E Confessional orthodoxy is a means of evangelistic witness

IV. Our confessional standards

A. The Bible (primary standard)

B. The Westminster Confession of Faith & Catechisms (secondary standards)

1) A summary of the whole counsel of God

2) Public statements of what we believe (no surprises, no secrets)

B. The Book of Church Order of the OPC (tertiary standards)