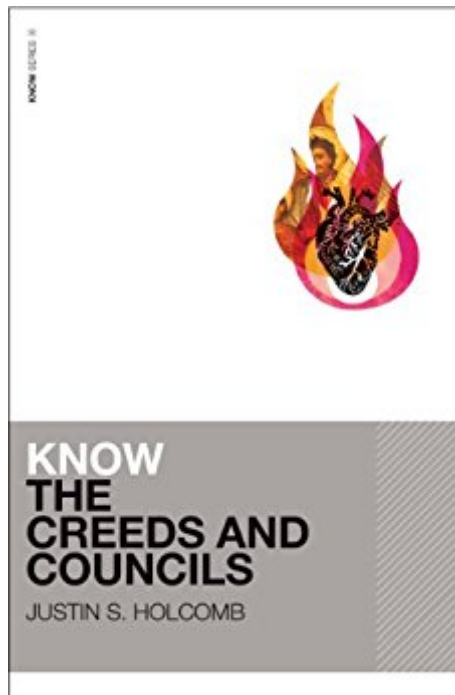




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Know The Creeds And Councils (KNOW Series Book 1)



Synopsis

In every generation, the Christian church must interpret and restate its bedrock beliefs, answering the challenges and concerns of the day. This accessible overview walks readers through centuries of creeds, councils, catechisms, and confessions--not with a dry focus on dates and places, but with an emphasis on the living tradition of Christian belief and why it matters for our lives today. As a part of the KNOW series, *Know the Creeds and Councils* is designed for personal study or classroom use, but also for small groups and Sunday schools wanting to more deeply understand the foundations of the faith. Each chapter covers a key statement of faith and includes a discussion of its historical context, a simple explanation of the statement's content and key points, reflections on contemporary and ongoing relevance, and discussion questions.

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Customer Reviews

You should read this book if you want a better understanding of the early creeds and councils of the Christian church. The book is a great history lesson with explanation of the significance of each element covered. The first half-to-2/3rds of the book is quite good, earning 5 stars from me. There is less-important material towards the end. Some of Holcomb's denominational beliefs begin to leak through in the second half, so there's a very tiny bit of spin to align with his church's traditions. Overall a very good read. I recommend!

I would definitely recommend Justin Holcomb's *Know the Creeds and Councils*. This isn't the first book I've read on the subject of church history, though I wish it had been! The book I read was thick, scholarly, and in my opinion, poorly organized. This one, on the other hand, was reader-friendly, well-organized, and written primarily to be UNDERSTOOD. In the introduction, he defines the four key terms used throughout the book: creeds, confessions, catechisms, and councils. He shares his purpose for writing the book: "to provide an accessible overview of the main creeds, confessions, catechisms, and councils of Christian history. It is an introduction to some of the most important theological declarations in the Christian tradition." He shares his method: "For each creed, confession, catechism, or council, I present historical background, a short summary of the content, and thoughts on contemporary relevance. At the end of each chapter are discussion questions and recommended reading for further study." The chapters are arranged chronologically, of course. The definitions he gives are straight forward. For example, this is how he defines the term catechism: "A catechism is a book or document giving a brief summary of the basic principles of Christianity in Q&A form. Catechisms represent the practical, 'on-the-ground' application of the main teaching agreed upon at church councils and expressed through creeds and confessions."

Chapter 1: The Apostles' Creed ca. 140
Chapter 2: Council of Nicaea and the Nicene Creed 325
Chapter 3: Councils of Ephesus 431, 449, 475
Chapter 4: Council of Chalcedon 451
Chapter 5: Athanasian Creed Late 400s to Early 500s
Chapter 6: Councils of Constantinople 381, 553, 681
Chapter 7: Councils of Carthage and Orange 419 and 529
Chapter 8: Council of Trent 1545-63
Chapter 9: Heidelberg Catechism 1563
Chapter 10: Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion 1563
Chapter 11: Westminster Confession of Faith 1646
Chapter 12: Second Vatican Council 1962-65
Chapter 13: Modern Confessions: Lausanne Covenant (1974) and Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978)

What I appreciate is Holcomb's assessment of each. He is fair, kind, respectful, of course, and the goal is never to persuade readers to believe exactly what he believes. But he provides a solid grounding for understanding Christian doctrines. One feels that he is a true (tour) guide: he knows the path and can point out the sights along the way. He can tell you where to

watch your step, where to be careful. And along the way, he can share interesting facts. Let's play Did You Know! Did you know.... "the Apostles' Creed has expressed the essentials of Christianity in a way that Christians of all stripes can rally around." Did you know.... "the Nicene Creed was the first creed to obtain universal authority in the church, and it improved the language of the Apostles' Creed by including more specific statements about the divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit." Did you know that.... "Without the truths that were expressed in the Definition of Chalcedon, it is difficult to see how our salvation was accomplished. If Christ were not fully human, or if he were not fully divine, he would not be able to serve as our mediator as the God-man. He would be either just another man or God himself." Did you know that.... "According to Martin Luther, the Athanasian Creed was "the most important and glorious composition since the days of the apostles." Did you know that.... "The Council of Trent aimed to remedy the problems within the Catholic Church that had contributed to the Reformers' cries of protest. The reforms included correcting abuses of power by the clergy, clarifying the balance of authority between Scripture and church tradition, and issuing official statements on justification, the sacraments, and purgatory. All in all, the Council of Trent did not repair the fractures between the Catholics and Protestants, but it did succeed in clarifying the Catholic Church's position on significant areas of doctrine and bringing moderate reform to the abuses of power against which the Reformers had revolted." Did you know that... "Even 450 years after it was written, the Heidelberg Catechism remains an official statement of theology for most of the branches of the Reformed church worldwide today." Did you know that.... "the Thirty-nine Articles created a fertile ground for theological exploration while simultaneously identifying the potential pitfalls of heresy." Did you know that... "The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) is a Reformed confession produced by that Westminster Assembly in London. Intended to set the doctrinal standards for the Church of England, it became a powerful force in the Church of Scotland and has influenced Presbyterian churches all over the world. Centuries later, numerous churches and denominations worldwide look to the Westminster Confession as their standard of doctrine, subordinate, of course, to Scripture" While I would not want to be quizzed on what I remember from the book several weeks later, I do feel it was a helpful read overall.

Into Church history? This is a great book. Need details, in-depth story lines, cultural context? This is not your book. It's a great introduction for those that have some history background and want to get a great overview. I plan to read more books on the subject, this just doesn't satisfy my hunger for

more information.

I have found this work to be a concise, to the point, and very clear articulation on the history and historical gatherings of the church throughout the ages as they sought to clarify biblical doctrine . Know the Creeds and Councils has given me the ability to equip the church without the laborious task of taking my congregation through volumes of historical data. Much thanks to Justin Holcomb! Looking forward to purchasing the rest of the series

A really good reminder that throughout its history the church has had faithful people committed to biblical clarity in its teaching and practice. We need to remember we are not the first incarnation of the church but we stand on the shoulders of countless faithful believers over years of history. For their work we are thankful and blessed.

This is a solid book with helpful insights into the development of church doctrine over the last two millennia. It is concise and accurate, but not extensively academic. This is a good book for anyone looking to understand the historical development of Christian doctrine for the first time or for someone who has studied it in the past but desires a helpful refresher.

Worked well for my purpose, which was to develop an adult Sunday School class on the history and necessity of Christian Creeds, This book provided the basic information, and I was able to supplement it from several other sources to develop the full program.

This was a great quick introduction to the creeds and confessions of the Christian church. At times it felt a little dry, but for the most part it kept the stories of the development of history interesting. I really appreciate the bibliographies for each chapter so that I can dig deeper into any of them which I may want to.

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