

THE GREAT OMISSIONS OF THE NICENE CREED

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Introduction: The Nicene Creed is the most widespread and respected summary of Christian faith. It has been recited in churches throughout the world for nearly 1,700 years and has shaped the world view of Christians for generations. Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Anglicans, Lutherans and others recite it in their liturgies as a summary of what they believe. Even contemporary evangelical and Pentecostal churches, searching for a statement of faith to post on their web sites, often turn to the Nicene Creed as an expression of reliable orthodoxy.

While the Creed contains many essential elements of Biblical teaching, it also OMIT'S many core Biblical truths. **These omissions** have left gaping holes in our Christian world view especially when it comes to understanding the eternal connection between the Body of Christ and Israel. They have also done enormous damage and hurt not only to the Jewish people but have also robbed the Church of a great part of its inheritance. These omissions MUST be addressed if we are to leave a better version of Christianity to the next generations, and if the cycle of Christian antisemitism and indifference towards Israel is to be broken.

The present text of the Nicene Creed goes back, not to the Council of Nicaea itself but to the Council of Constantinople in 381 BC nearly 50 years later. It has been reaffirmed by subsequent church councils and incorporated into the liturgy of so many churches that it has been presumed to be a reliable summary of Christian faith.

An Inadequate Summary of Christian Faith

As most Christians agree with the actual statements of the Nicene Creed, it is popular among ecumenically minded Christians to join hands and say, "at least we can agree on this!" They then propose that the Creed can be used as a common formula to unite the churches.¹ I will argue, on the contrary, that there are so many glaring omissions in the Creed that it is **totally unsuitable as a statement of faith for any church.** The fault with the Nicene Creed is not in what it states but in what it **omits.** As an interesting window into the beliefs

of the 4th century church it is worthy of some attention, but as a statement of faith for 21st century Christians it is thoroughly insufficient.

The statements of the Council of Nicaea and the Nicene Creed do not contain in themselves theological error. The problem with the Creed, however, is that the church began to use it as a summary of Christian doctrine and the basis of Christian instruction.² It was assumed that if believers were instructed in the core tenets of the Nicene Creed they would have a good foundation in Christian doctrine. Because the Nicene Creed fails to mention many essential elements of New Testament faith, especially with respect to the Jewishness of Jesus and the eternal place of the Jewish people in the plan and purposes of God, it is an inadequate summary of Christian faith and systemically antisemitic and anti-Zionist.

The Nicene Creed omits many essential truths that cannot be addressed in this short paper. For example The Creed makes no mention of personal faith and repentance, no mention of the New Birth, no mention of the call to follow Jesus, be His disciples and live by His teachings, no mention of the infilling of the Holy Spirit, no reference to personal dedication to the Lord or to the **Love Commandment**.³ It is therefore inadequate as a summary of the believers' faith and unsuitable as a mission statement for the Church.

By using the creed as a summary of Christian faith and ignoring so much essential truth the Creed opened the way for "Nominal Christianity." Nominal Christianity happens when believers express faith without repentance, mental assent without surrender, agreement to Christian propositions without a commitment to abide them.⁴

Remember and Recover

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to **lead us into all truth** and especially **to bring neglected truth to our remembrance**. As Jesus say, *"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* (John 8.31-32) The first thing the truth liberates us from is **ignorance**. To be ignorant means to be uninformed or unaware of something but it also means to choose to ignore. After Nicaea

the church became ignorant of the mystery of Israel in both senses, and the consequences have been catastrophic. Paul warned the gentile believers not to ignore the mystery of Israel but that is exactly what the greater part of historic Christianity has done by assuming that the Nicene Creed was an adequate summary of basic Christian faith. *"For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be **ignorant** of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in."*

(Romans 11.25)

The Prophetic Call Of The Theologian & Bible Teacher

One of the tasks of the theologian, pastor, preacher is to be a prophetic voice calling the church to recover treasures within the Kingdom of God that have been forgotten and omitted. *"Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things **NEW** and **OLD**.""* (Matthew 13.52) The Holy Spirit is at work throughout the church to bring to our remembrance many forgotten and neglected truths. One of the most important of these truths is the eternal and central place of Israel in the plan of God.

In examining the Omissions of the Nicene Creed (with the plumbline of the Word of God) we aware that we - Catholics, Evangelical & Orthodox etc. - often *"make void the word of God by our tradition."* and so, in pointing out some of the glaring omissions of the Nicene Creed, we speak not to scold from some self-righteous perch - but to invite the church worldwide to join with us in an adventure of rediscovery, repentance and liberation. By recovering our connection and covenant relationship with Israel we can leave a better and more perfect gospel to the next generation. I cannot in this short paper address all the omissions in the Nicene Creed but can only focus on those which affect the relationship between Christians and the Jewish people.

We are here at this Jerusalem Summit to face our mistakes so that we can be freed from them and not repeat them. As Santayana said, *"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."*⁵ We come to **lay the axe to the theological root** of Christian

antisemitism - which made us ignore the eternal place of the Jews and Israel in the plan of God.

Omission 1 God's Covenant With Abraham

The Creed begins by professing faith in God as the Creator and in Jesus the Co-creator. Then it moves on to affirm faith in the fact that the Son of God came from heaven to earth, becoming incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary. All Christians will agree with this, but astonishingly The Nicene Creed **omits everything between the Creation and the Incarnation.** Two thirds of the pages of the Bible (including the history of Israel) are ignored with one stroke of a theological airbrush, and this omission has had catastrophic consequences on the relationship between Jews and Christians.

By ignoring the place of Israel in its basic teachings, the church turned its back on the Jews. Thus it left its members in ignorance concerning the eternal place of Israel in the plan of God and ignored Paul's teaching in Romans Chapters 9-11 that the Jewish people even though many are *"enemies of the gospel for your sake"* they are *"beloved for the sake of the fathers, for the God's gifts and calling of God (to them) are irrevocable."* (Romans 11.28,29)

The gifts and calling of Israel are summarized in the Covenant God made with Abraham as recorded Genesis Chapters 12-28. This **Covenant with Abraham** is a **covenant of BLESSING** to Abraham and his descendants and to those who will honor that covenant. (Genesis 12. 2) *"I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* Secondly it is a **covenant that deeds LAND to Abaham and his descendants** through Isaac and Jacob - specifically the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean sea. (Genesis 15:18-21) Thirdly it is **an everlasting** and irrevocable covenant (Genesis 17.7) This means that the promises of blessing to those who bless Israel and recognize His covenant therefore still stand today and the Land promise God gave to Israel still stands today.

Throughout the Bible including the New Testament the Abrahamic Covenant is affirmed. Jesus says *"I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I am the God of the living and not of*

the dead." (Matthew 22.32) and Paul writes: "Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant **to** the circumcision for the truth of God, **to confirm** the promises made **to** the fathers." (Romans 15.8) Thus the post Nicaean church, by ignoring the Abrahamic Covenant, ignored one of the central messages of the scriptures: that God has promised to bless Israel and bring it back to its land, and to bless those who recognize His covenant with them. By failing to instruct its members on these important truths the church left its members without a Biblical world view of God's plan for world redemption and with no understanding of the significance of Israel's return to its land. By using the Nicene Creed as a summary of Christian faith the gross error of **replacement theology became systemic to Christian** teaching and understanding for centuries.

Theology Has Consequences

What we *believe* will determine what we *think*; what we think will determine what we do and how we *act*. And this omission has had horrendous consequences. If the church had remembered God's covenant with Israel and instructed its members to be aware of the fact that they are still God's chosen and beloved people with a unique destiny there would have been no massacre of Jews by the Christian Crusader armies in the Middle Ages; there would have been no Blood Libels, no Inquisitions, no Pogroms and no Holocaust. Furthermore, if Christians *of our* time (when antisemitism and antizionism are escalating) were aware of their debt to Israel there would be far less support for the mobs marching through the streets of our democracies today in support of those who call for the annihilation of Israel . What we believe about God determines the course of our civilization. So what we are doing in these days at this Jerusalem Summit is **not just an academic exercise but a part of an urgent restoration movement** which we pray will result in a major reset to the trajectory of Christianity and Christian theology throughout the Body of Christ.

Anti-Semitism & Anti Zionism

It is important to note the difference between antisemitism and Anti Zionism. Antisemitism can be defined as prejudice and hostility towards the Jewish people based on their race or their religion. Antisemitism is a moral and legal issue, but Antizionism is a

theological issue. Antisemitism is hostility towards Jews whereas antizionism is hostility to their God given destiny to possess the Promised Land. Since atheists and humanists do not believe in the God of the Bible they do not respect God's special calling and promises to Israel. Their world view has no place for Israel's uniqueness. Anti-Zionism is therefore embraced by most atheists and humanists and secular politicians because they do not believe in the promise making God of the Bible and so find common ground with Muslims who deny the special place of Israel. Christians are under great pressure to capitulate and to choose a secular world view over a biblical world one. For this reason church leaders urgently need to instruct their people in these issues so that they do not succumb to the pressure of humanistic secular society and the Islamic agenda.

If God's calling of Israel to their land, is part of His plan then anti-Zionism must be opposed by everyone (including theologians and preachers) who believe that God's covenant with Abraham is everlasting. It is not enough for church leaders to repent of antisemitism we must also repent of antizionism - **opposition to Israel's destiny in the Land of Promise**. While antisemitism can be dealt with by the courts of human rights, Anti-Zionism can only be dealt with by **theologians and preachers**. The Land Promise and the other promises that God gave Israel clashes with the world view of those who do not believe in God's Biblical promises.

Omission 2 The Christology of Nicaea Omits The Jewishness Of Jesus

The Creed presents Jesus as Son of God and co-creator of the universe with God, the Father, but it makes no mention of the Jewishness of Jesus. It ignores His descent from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and King David. This contrasts sharply with New Testament scriptures which constantly honor the Jewishness of Jesus. In the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew, the testimony of the Wise Men from the east, the words of the Angel Gabriel to Mary, the praises of Mary, Elizabeth and Zechariah, the words of the angels to the Shepherds of Bethlehem there is constant celebration that Jesus is the promised Messiah who will take the throne of David and deliver Israel.⁶ All these early witnesses understood that Jesus is the Messiah God sent to fulfill - not to do away with - the mercies promised to

Abraham.

The Nicene Creed accurately defends the divinity of Jesus **but ignores His mission to be Israel's Messiah**. Consequently the generations of Christians who received their basic doctrine from the Creed knew about Jesus' divinity and humanity but had no instruction of the part of His mission that concerns His calling to be Israel's Messiah. The theology and teaching that emerged from Nicaea and is encapsulated in the Creed presents Jesus as Son of God and Son Of Man, but ignores the reality that Jesus is **Son of Abraham and Son of David**. For this reason it is an inadequate representation of Biblical Christology and in urgent need of reform.

Omission 3 The Omission of The David Covenant

We have focused on the omissions in the Nicene Creed from the time between the Creation and the Incarnation. Let us now look at some of the omissions in the Nicene Creed concerning future events - the Second Coming Of the Messiah. The Creed describes Jesus' coming again to judge the living and the dead, but it makes **no reference to the fact that He is coming again to restore and take the throne of David. The Davidic Covenant** is a covenant and series of promises that God made with David promising that one of his descendants will restore the throne of David and reign on it forever. This covenant with David is clearly stated in Psalm 89 and in 2 Samuel 7 and referred to throughout the prophets. *I have made a covenant with My chosen,*

I have sworn to My servant David:

⁴ Your seed I will establish forever,

And build up your throne to all generations. (Psalm 89.3-4)

The Bible presents the Lord's Second Coming as fulfilling The Davidic Covenant. He is returning not just to *'judge the living and the dead'* but to fulfil the promises of the Davidic Covenant - to restore and reign upon the throne of David as King of Israel and King of all nations. The Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that her son is the Messiah who will reign over the house of David forever.

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and shall call His name Jesus. He

will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1 .31.32). The Jesus of the New Testament is not just King of the universe and King of all nations, but He is specifically the King of Israel. We cannot **disconnect** the Coming of The Lord from Israel's destiny as the Nicene Creed does.

Jesus disciples were eager to know when He would restore the Throne of David as they understood that this was an essential part of His ministry. (Matthew 24 and Luke 21) They asked Jesus, as He was ascending and promising to return, "*Will you at this time to restore the Kingdom to Israel?*"(Acts 1.6) He explained to His followers that His coming to take the throne of David would not take place **until Israel came back from all the nations.**

Ezekiel Chapter 37 - the dry bones chapter - shows clearly the coming of the Messiah to rule Israel will be happen after they are regathered from the nations. "*Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land;²² and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. "David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever."* (Ezekiel 37.21,22.24,25)

The Bible clearly shows that today's regathering of Israel is the essential precursor to the Lord's return. If we sincerely believe in Messiah's return then all Christians should ardently support the regathering of the Jewish people to their land.

Since the Creed ignores the prophetic scriptures concerning Israel's return, many Christians also ignore them and remain indifferent to the miracle of Israel's restoration and sometimes join with those who call for its destruction. Because of this ignorance, the miracle of Israel's rebirth and restoration (the most prophesied event in the Bible) is not celebrated

in many churches. Even end time prophecy teachers often fail to place the return of the Lord in its true context of Jesus' coming to take the Throne of David as an event that is preceded by the return of the Jews to their land.

The Consequences Of The Omissions Of The Nicene Creed

By ignoring the context of Jesus' work within the call and destiny of Israel the Creed and the Councils that reinforced the Creed have placed an enormous wedge between Jews and Christians. This divide can only be removed by REPENTANCE and by bringing our theology into line with God's word.

Call To Action

1) Let us acknowledge (openly and frequently) that **we stand in covenant relationship with the Jewish people** because it is what the Bible teaches. We were wrong to ignore the Abrahamic Covenant, and the Davidic Covenant in our creeds and teaching and we were wrong when we failed to teach about the importance of the regathering of Israel to their Land.

2) Let us agree that just as it is unacceptable for Christians to deny the divinity of Jesus, it is also **unacceptable for Christians to deny the special place of Israel** in the plan of God.

3) Let us affirm our belief that **the Second Coming of the Messiah means that Yeshua - the quintessential Jew - will literally return to the Mount of Olives** (as promised in Acts Chapter 1 and Zechariah Chapter 14.4) to take the throne of David in Jerusalem and be the Messiah King of Israel and King over the whole world.

4) Let us **recognize that Israel's return** to its land fulfills the promises made with the patriarchs, the words of Jesus and the prophets, and that we are therefore required to recognize and support it. Although we may disagree with some actions and policies of the Israeli people and government, we will never fail to support and pray for their destiny in their promised land.

5) We call for **reform of Christian teaching concerning Israel** in our Bible schools, seminaries and in our pulpits.

6) Let us recognize that Repentance from Antisemitism is not enough unless we also **repent of anti-Zionism and of our failure to recognize and support Israel's destiny to be blessed in the Land of Promise** and to be a blessing to all nations.

¹ **Pope Francis & Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I:** Top leaders of the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches have consistently proposed the Creed as a bridge between their traditions. The two leaders emphasize the shared text as the ultimate expression of our common faith in Christ.

See article by Justitn McClellan in Detroit Catholic Feb 6th, 2025, **Pope: Nicene Creed unites Christians, overcoming division through faith.**

Cardinal Kurt Koch: As the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, notes that Nicene theology is a bedrock resource upon which church unity has been built, pointing out that historical divisions over its statements no longer hinder modern ecumenical dialogue. See Website of the [Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity](#)

Contemporary Academic Theologians: Renowned scholars like **Robert W. Jenson, Carl E. Braaten, and Alan Torrance** (contributors to volumes like *Nicene Christianity: The Future for a New Ecumenism*) argue that confessing the Nicene Creed is the best path forward to overcoming modern postmodern fractures and developing a unified church. [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#)]

² "The Nicene -Constantinopolitan Creed by **Fr. Demetrios Bathrellos**
Associate Professor of Theology
[Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology](#) Published August 2025

³ In his groundbreaking book "**The Jesus Creed**," Scot McKnight describes the amazing effect of using the Shema (as amplified by Jesus) as a statement of faith for himself and his congregation. Jesus amended the Shema of Deuteronomy 6.4-9 by adding Leviticus 19.18 to it. The daily practice of reciting the Shema revolutionized his own life and that of his congregation. " He calls Jesus' words in Mark 12.29-31: "**The Jesus Creed.**" "*Hear O Israel the Lord our God the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.*"

"**The Jesus Creed**" by Scot McKnight published by Paraclete Press 2014 (second edition 2022)

⁴ **Douglas Groothuis** addresses the problem of "**nominal Christianity**" (professing to be a Christian in name only without genuine faith or transformation) primarily in his book "**Christianity That Counts: Being a Christian in a Non-Christian World**" Published by Baker Books in 1994

⁵ George Santayana *The Life of Reason: Reason in Common Sense*. Vol 1. p.84 published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1905.

⁶ Matthew 1.1-17; Matthew 2.1-2; Luke 1.30-33; Luke 1.54-55; Luke 1.68-69