

THE ATHANASIAN CREED

From the *Russian Orthodox Psalter
Mystery*

Oct 29/ Nov 11 2009 23rd Wednesday after Pentecost

A traditional Russian Orthodox Psalter has a lot of things in it besides the Psalms. There are prayers said before and after each Kathisma, the Biblical Odes, and lots of instructional material. To my knowledge, the Russian Orthodox Psalter, edited by David James and recently approved by Bishop Jerome, is the only one of its kind in English, and for many, including myself, the prayers between the Kathismas and certain other materials will be seen for the first time. I thought I would publish, with David's permission, some of the additional material in the Psalter.

This Psalter may be purchased right now for forty dollars (postpaid) from David directly (see below). Eventually, he will have it printed, and is planning, at my request, to make a pocket sized addition.

I think **EVERY** Christian should have a pocket sized Psalter with them at all times (and when this edition is pocket sized, it will be preeminently suited to private prayer since it has all the prayers between Kathismas, which, I believe, are not used in church)

We waste so much time, and have so many times during the day when we are waiting. We wait thirty minutes to get our oil changed, or 20 minutes when we are early for a meeting, or 10 minutes before dinner when we do not want to start something else. We can chant a stasis in a few minutes, a kathisma in perhaps 15. Is there a better use of our "filler" time?

This Psalter is a new translation, using the beloved "Coverdale" translation of the Psalms as a base. It has been reworked extensively to conform better to the Slavonic Psalter. To tell the truth, I want to give it a try, because the language is excellent, and it has so much more in it than the "Boston" Psalter. Of course, I know many of the "Boston" Psalter psalms by heart, so the transition will be difficult. I have no linguistic opinion about which is better, because I am not a linguist. Of course, this new Psalter is the only one officially approved by our church for liturgical use, but I must admit that I am not the best rule follower, so that will not be my main motivation (did I just say that?).

Anyway, I know David and want to support his work, and am thrilled to see it is of such a high quality. So almost without further ado, I present the **Athanasian Creed** (with some whitespace added to Make it easier to read on the web and footnotes, which are mine, and then a few comments), which is traditionally present in the Russian Orthodox Psalter.

To buy a self published copy of the Psalter, send \$40.00 to

David James

PO Box 530

Rye, NH 03870-0530

This blog will announce when a printing run is made.



The Athanasian Creed

being the Confession of Faith of our holy Father,
Athanasius the Great, Patriarch of Alexandria

WHOSOEVER WILL BE SAVED, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic¹ Faith. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholic Faith is this, That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit.

But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit.

The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Spirit uncreate.

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal.

And yet they are not three eternal, but one eternal.

As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Spirit Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord.

And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity, to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; so are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion, to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. Likewise also the Holy Spirit is of

the Father, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons, one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other, none is greater, or less than another; But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.

Concerning Christ

FURTHERMORE, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds, and Man, of the Substance of his Mother, born in the world; perfect God, and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting; equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood.

Who although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ; one; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God; one altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven; He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire. This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

The Holy Trinity is the greatest mystery of our faith. A “Mystery” is not something which will always remain incomprehensible, as we use the word in our day (for instance some(!) men may say “Women are a mystery!”) The biblical understanding is that a mystery is something about God that is difficult to understand, but will be revealed in due time.

How will it be revealed? We cannot understand God until we become more like Him. Our Lord showed us the way to live and made us capable, but we cannot understand until we become morally perfected.

The Holy Trinity is only understood by the Holy. “Holy things for the Holy”. “To the pure, all things are pure”.

I remember years ago when Kareem Abdul-Jabbar explained why he became a Muslim (he was raised Roman Catholic). He said that the idea of God being three persons was incomprehensible to him, and he thought it must be wrong. He tried to appropriate the understanding of the Holy Trinity with his mind, and inevitably failed, as we all would. For the Orthodox, The Holy Trinity can only be understood by moral perfection. This is possible. It is also very hard. That is why there will be few who will ever understand the Holy Trinity. Will we be among them?

This article is at:

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¹ “Catholic” – a much misunderstood word in our day! It means “Universal” and does not mean “Roman Catholic”.