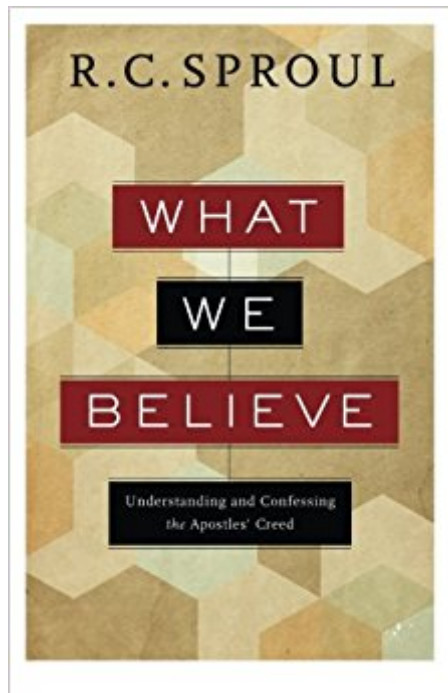




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# What We Believe: Understanding And Confessing The Apostles' Creed



## Synopsis

What do Christians believe about God the Father, Jesus Christ, the church, salvation, eternal life, and more? This contemporary classic from theologian R. C. Sproul provides a matchless introduction to the basics of the Christian faith.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"When a person embraces the Christian faith and says with assurance, 'I believe . . . ,' then that person has truly embarked upon life."--R. C. Sproul  
To be a Christian is to be one who believes. But believes in what? In an age of cafeteria-style religion--a little bit of this, a little bit of that--believers new and old may be overlooking the basic tenets of faith in favor of modern trends that have no biblical basis. For millennia, Christians have affirmed the Apostles' Creed because it summarizes the tenets of Christian belief, boldly declaring that there is uncompromising truth that is foundational to life. In this book, renowned theologian R. C. Sproul presents the creed statement by statement, unpacking what it means to believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and what Christians believe about the church, salvation, and eternal life. R. C. Sproul has served the church as a seminary professor, pastor, and author of more than one hundred books. He is the founder and chairman of Ligonier Ministries and the chancellor of Reformation Bible College, and his teaching can be heard daily on the program *Renewing Your Mind*, which broadcasts around the world. Dr. Sproul is also executive editor of *Tabletalk* magazine and general editor of the *Reformation Study Bible*.

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Virtually everything by RC Sproul is great...

Once again RC brings vitality to theology. Recommend.

great

As expected

I enjoyed reading this book because I got some answers to why we say what we say in the Creed.

In 1973 R.C. Sproul's first book, *The Symbol*, was published. It was an appropriate title, but not one that grabs attention. This book is now in its 4th edition, and has its 4th title. In 1982 it was released as *Basic Training*. And in 1998 it was released as *Renewing Your Mind*. It has been recently updated and released as *What We Believe*. This is probably the best title this volume has had because it goes straight to the point. The book is about the Apostles' Creed and therefore basic theology for Christians. While I have not read previous editions, which is surprising to me actually, this is not the same book. It is updated and interacts with some newer challenges and has contemporary illustrations. This book is very much what you expect from R.C. Sproul. He presents theology and philosophy (his undergraduate degree is in philosophy) in an understandable and interesting way. His purpose is revealed at the end of the first chapter: "The following chapters offer a contemporary explanation of its teaching- not to give a historical exposition of each point, but to apply its basic tenets to contemporary faith-issues." This means it is not an exhaustive book. It does not get into all the historical controversies that it addresses. This is an introductory book. This is not Herman Witsius' 2 volume work (my copy seems to be missing) or even Michael Horton's book *We Believe*. It isn't like *Rooted* by Cannata and Reitano with its missional focus either. This really is basic training. While I would be interested in many of the historical controversies the Creed addresses, not everyone is. In basic training, a drill sergeant will deconstruct you before building you

into a soldier. This book, in some ways, seeks to deconstruct elements of a non-Christian world view to build up a Christian one. He begins with the words "I believe" to talk about what faith is. He talks about content, assent and faith. Faith is rational, not a leap into the existential dark. Saving faith looks to and delights in Christ. Faith is not superstition either, this is seen most clearly in suffering. Faith complicates life because it brings an ethical system with it. True faith will produce a changed life; an increasingly holy life. "To say that faith is reasonable is not to confuse faith with rationalism. Rationalism emphasizes the mind's ability to understand all reality without help." This is why R.C. says "Faith involves confessing more than professing; in the final analysis, it is a platform of commitment to the will of God." The content of our biblical faith should fill our minds and find a happy home in our hearts so we become more like Jesus. Faith is not faith in faith, but in God. Here Sproul stresses the need for content. He notes a rally by Louis Farrakhan where he was surrounded and applauded by a number of "Christian" pastors. The god Farrakhan believes in is incredibly different from the one "we" do. There is also existentialism's impact on Christian theology that drove it to liberalism and the Jesus Seminar nonsense that robbed theology of its content. From there he moves into how we can speak of God, and can't. He discusses the hidden God who is also the God revealed. In the midst of this he brings out Moby Dick, one of his favorite novels and the subject of his dissertation. "Our talk of him is legitimate because he has entered into the arena of human activity. We confess not only that there is a God, but that God can be known and that our knowledge of him can be meaningfully communicated." One of the challenges that comes up is creation. While he isn't pushing a 6 24-hour day creation, he focuses on our dignity as a result of creation. The other option is chaos, the loss of dignity and of values. God is both above creation (transcendent) and actively involved in creation (immanent) thus ruling out panentheism and deism respectively. He then moves into Jesus as the conclusive revelation of God. He briefly interacts with the contemporary attempts to remove Jesus from history or separate a historical Jesus from the church's theology of Jesus. He focuses on many of the names of Christ to reveal who He is. His chapter on the virgin birth addresses the challenges presented by the attack on miracles. He also defends the historic Christian view from the common rabbinic (and liberal) view that "alma" in Isaiah doesn't necessitate a virgin birth. The New Testament, however, clearly does teach that Mary was. "alma" doesn't exclude virginity, and Matthew's account clarifies it. One of the weak links in the book is the chapter on eschatology. He sticks closely to the Creed, but doesn't really address any of the evangelical views that in competition with one another. Perhaps this reflects his earlier lack of commitment to a millennial position. There are a few other places where I wish he would offer greater clarity. This is really a book for those who are new to their faith, or the Apostles' Creed. While

not necessarily simplistic, Sproul is introducing concepts to people. More advanced readers will not be challenged enough. But it is one to keep on hand to help those younger in the faith.[I received a complimentary copy of the book for the purposes of review.]

Dr. Sproul is truly a biblical scholar and he communicates as such. He is a scholar for which I hold great respect. What We Believe is the first of his books that I have read; well, attempted to read. Sproul is a theologian and I believe that he is speaking to other theologians. He engages minds and in my case that necessitated the need to become very familiar with my dictionary. I gained knowledge but I felt out of my depth. I need more smarticles. Embarrassing to admit but true. Many apologists of the Christian Faith exist providing clear scholarship and excellent value. I was drawn to read What We Believe, one of Sproul's apologetics books, based upon his step-by-step exegesis of the Apostles' Creed. The Apostles' Creed. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he arose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen. In case you are not a theologian as I am let me point out a statement which confused me. My husband cleared it up for me. The statement towards the end of the creed which says "I believe in the holy catholic church" threw me as I am not Catholic. Darrell informed me that the lowercase catholic means the universal or world-wide church as opposed to the uppercase Catholic specifying the Catholic religion. I received a review copy in exchange for my honest and unbiased review. My thanks to the author and publisher. For all of my reviews visit my blog at [...]

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