



## Back to Basics

The Byzantine Church to which we belong has its roots in the Greek speaking Churches founded by the Apostles. The church developed its present structures in the Byzantine Empire, and subsequently spread to Eastern Europe and the Middle East. It was established in North America in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.



## Back to Basics

The church is God's people who:

- Gather together in his name; thereby calling themselves Christian
- Share a common faith and hope based on the love of God
- Affirm the truth of their faith, belief and experience
- Proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to all

Byzantine Christianity is a **way of life** initiated by Jesus Christ. It is a **living organism** composed of those who believe in Him. A Byzantine Christian is one who fully lives and proclaims God's Truth as it has been revealed by Jesus Christ, and experienced at all times by His people, the Church.



## Back to Basics

**Byzantine Christianity** is rooted in Holy Tradition and Holy Scripture. Holy tradition:

- Is the **ongoing life** of the people
- Is the **total experience** of the Church as it has been passed on or given over to us from the time of Christ and the apostles
- Is **the very life** of the Church itself as it is **inspired** and **guided** by the Holy Spirit.

**Holy tradition** is composed of those things which are essential to the life and salvation of God's people. It should never be confused with the various *traditions* and *customs* often associated with Byzantine Christianity.



## Back to Basics

**Holy Scripture** is the foremost product of Holy Tradition. We believe the Holy Scriptures:

- Are the **word of God**
- Were written by men who were **inspired** and **guided** by the Holy Spirit; and
- Are the very **self-revelation** of God Himself.



## Back to Basics

**The Bible** is a collection of books written and compiled over thousands of years by many different people.

- The **Old Testament** records God's revelation prior to the coming of Jesus Christ.
- The **New Testament** completes God's revelation by proclaiming Jesus Christ as the Saviour of all.



## Back to Basics

The **writings of the Holy Fathers** are regarded as sources of our faith. These writings, in full harmony with the scriptures, explained the Church's essential teachings and defended the truth faith.



## Back to Basics

What is Faith?

**FAITH** is the very foundation of our lives as Byzantine Christians. Without faith God cannot reveal Himself to us through Jesus Christ.

**FAITH** is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Ephesians 1:11)

**FAITH** enables us to know God. It is the key to salvation: *Without having seen Him you love Him; though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. As the outcome of your faith you obtain salvation of your souls* (1 Peter 1:8, 9).

**FAITH** is essential for eternal life: *For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life... He who believes in Him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God* (John 3:16, 18).

**FAITH** involves **trust** and **belief** in God.

**FAITH** must actively affect our lives: *It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself to me* (Galatians 2:20).

*Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do...* (John 14-12).



## Back to Basics

### THE CREED:

We proclaim our belief and faith in God through the **Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed** which is:

- **An affirmation** of our *personal faith* as Byzantine Christians
- **The public proclamation** of *God's Truth* and **the living experience** of His people, the Church; and
- **An expression** of all that has been *revealed* to us by God through the Holy Scripture, Holy Tradition and Jesus Christ, His Son.

Why was the Creed written?

By the fourth century, a number of false teachings about Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Church had developed. In order to combat these heresies and clearly state the truth, two **Ecumenical Councils** were held. The **Council of Nicea** (325 A.D.) clarified the doctrine of Jesus Christ by producing the first portion of the Creed. In 381 A.D. the **Council of Constantinople** defined the correct belief concerning the Holy Spirit, thereby editing the second portion of the Creed.



## Back to Basics

### REVELATION

God does not hide Himself from us. As Psalm 118:26-27 points out, "God is the Lord and has revealed Himself unto us; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."

We are able *to know God* and *to have a relationship* with Him because He has shown Himself to us. While it is impossible to know His *innermost being or essence*, we have been shown that which we can see, understand and grasp of His divine nature and will.



## Back to Basics

### REVELATION

In the Old Testament, God revealed Himself in many ways:

- In Creation  
By creating all things God
  1. Reveals Himself as the **Author** and **Source** of Life;
  2. Shows us His **infinite love**; and
  3. Manifests Himself as **the One who calls all into being** by sharing His life, love and existence.
- To Moses  
Moses encountered God in the form of a burning bush. When Moses asked God's Name, He replied, "**I AM.**" God revealed Himself as **Existence Itself**. The very basis of His divine nature is *to be, to exist* and *to share His being and existence* with His creation.
- Through the Prophets  
God also revealed Himself through the prophets. The prophets were called **to proclaim God's will** and **to call His People** to lead holy lives. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is One... He is Holy..."

### GOD, THEN REVEALS HIMSELF AS

- **The Creator and Source of Life;**
- **Existence Itself**
- **Love Itself**
- **All -powerful, all-knowing, all-merciful, ever existing, and eternal; and**
- **One, Holy, the Lord God** of all.



## Back to Basics

In the New Testament God fully reveals himself through Jesus Christ.

**JESUS CHRIST** is God's greatest revelation to his people. Jesus Christ came into the world to complete God's revelation. He is:

- **The fullness** and **perfection** of God's self-revelation;
- **The fulfillment** of God's gradual and partial revelation in the Old Testament; and
- The one truly "**Blessed** ... who comes in the name of the Lord."