

Old Western Culture

*A Christian Approach to the Great Books*

Year 2: The Romans

Unit 4

# NICENE CHRISTIANITY

*The Age of Creeds and Councils*



A ROMAN ROADS MEDIA *Video Course*

*Exam Answer Key*

*Please Note: This exam may be periodically updated, expanded, or revised.  
Download the latest revision at [www.RomanRoadsMedia.com/materials](http://www.RomanRoadsMedia.com/materials).*

## NOTES FOR PARENT OR TEACHER

### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- Have the student answer all questions in full sentences.
- Exam should take 45 to 90 minutes. Do not allow more than 2 hours.
- Feel free to allow the student more paper, or to type the answers on a computer.
- This is a closed-book exam. If typing the answers, no Internet access allowed.

### POINT SYSTEM

This exam consists of ten questions, valued at 8–12 points each, for a total of 100 points.

Two extra credit questions are worth 5 points each. If a student answers correctly to all questions, as well as the bonus questions then he or she will have scored 110%. Partial credit (e.g., 5/10 points) may be given if the student correctly answers part of the question, but misses some important elements. Points lost on the main exam can be recouped by answering the bonus questions correctly.

### HOW TO GRADE

Because the exam consists of essay questions, it will be both harder to answer and harder to grade compared to multiple choice exams. However, it allows the student to think through what he has learned in a deeper and more meaningful way and aids in long-term retention and more useful application. For example, you will find that a student who is required to answer essay questions will more easily integrate what he has learned into his general knowledge and able to use it in informal conversation.

Since these are not multiple choice, *answers will vary*. This answer key provides sample correct responses for each question, but it is very possible that a varying answer may still be correct. If you have followed along with the video and interacted with your student throughout the term, you should be able to determine if a certain variation on the answer is a correct one. If you are truly not sure, sit down with your student and figure out the correct answer together. You can also submit questions by sending an email to [info@romanroadsmedia.com](mailto:info@romanroadsmedia.com).

Also, we purposefully created short and concise answers in this answer key. We expect most student answers to be longer, though this is not a requirement. Many of these questions could be an entire paper topic, and we would encourage students display as much of their knowledge as they can on the paper. This is also why we encourage the parents or teacher to allow the student to type out the answers.



## HOW TO STUDY FOR THE TEST

Have your student read through his or her notes from throughout the term as general preparation, as well as study the answers from the workbook questions. These questions will be familiar to the student who has worked through all questions in their workbook.

## THE A AND B EXAMS

This course includes two exams, designated A and B. Although there is some overlap, many of the questions will be different, but equivalent. These tests may be used in a couple of ways. One way is to use exam A as a practice exam, open or closed book, and exam B as the graded, closed-book exam. Exam B could also be used as a “second chance” exam if exam A didn’t go as well as the student had hoped.

There is flexibility here, and the parent or teacher is free to choose if and how to use the extra exam.

## “MY STUDENT IS HAVING TROUBLE GETTING 100%!”

This can prove a frustration with essay exams. One thing to watch out for is that there *is* variation in correct answers. Read the “How to Grade” note in the previous page for more information on this.

Another issue is that we have culturally grown accustomed to 100% being the norm for a “good student” and believe that less than 100% indicates a crucial deficiency. But 100% in the classical Latin system is “SCL” (*Summa Cum Laude*), which means “with highest praise.” In the Latin system of grading, SCL is reserved for the student who goes beyond the call of duty, and often even teaches the teacher something. In a system where “good” is 100%, going beyond the call of duty is not incentivized, and good students do not progress. So do not worry if your student gets an 85% —in the Latin system that’s a CH, or *Cum Honore*, with honor —and should be received as such.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions, feel free to email us at [info@romanroadsmedia.com](mailto:info@romanroadsmedia.com). We love to hear from our parents and teachers, and look forward to serving you in any way possible!



# Nicene Christianity

## Exam A Answer Key

### ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. How and why did the Emperor Diocletian change the structure of governance in the Roman Empire? (10 pts)

Because the Roman Empire had grown to massive proportions, Diocletian appointed a co-emperor in the East to help him rule. He then also appointed subrulers, Caesars, to bring further stability through more focused oversight of various regions.

2. Why is Church history central to all other history? How ought that fact to affect our interpretation of other history? (12 pts)

Church history is the central history, because God works through the church to redeem all of creation. Therefore, we ought to interpret all other history in view of its relationship to Church history.

3. What role has the Nicene Creed played in defining the church? (10 pts)

The Nicene Creed, along with the Apostles' Creed, is the most foundational statement of Christian beliefs that describes who the church is and what the church believes. Thus, while the creed cannot define for us who is saved and who is not, it can tell us who is part of the church and who believes the most basic and most commonly held Christian doctrine.

4. Why is an old great book better than a modern commentary on that book? (10 pts)

If an old book has been recognized as a great book over many centuries, it is because the author was not just brilliant, but also effective at communicating his ideas clearly. Therefore, a great book is likely to be more comprehensible than any modern book about it.

5. How are C. S. Lewis's and Augustine's conversion stories similar? (8 pts)

C. S. Lewis, like Augustine, searched for truth down all sorts of trails, refusing to settle until he found the truth that actually satisfied his longings.

6. What is Augustine confessing in *Confessions*? (12 pts)

The theme of Augustine's *Confessions* is how God faithfully sought Augustine and irresistibly drew him back to Himself even when Augustine thought himself farthest from God and most rebellious against Him.



7. What are the two main things that motivate Augustine to write *City of God*? (10 pts)

Augustine wants to answer the pagan charge that the Christians were to blame for the sack of Rome. He also wants to present the Christian worldview to the Roman world, showing that it is superior to their worldview.

8. How was private Roman piety different from public worship of Olympian gods? (10 pts)

While public Roman worship was designed to arouse patriotism and to establish the state, private piety was a nightmare of ancestor worship and endless placation of the myriad of mundane deities.

9. How did Augustine describe evil in relation to the Aristotelian system of causes? (8 pts)

Augustine said that evil does not have an efficient cause; it does not have a maker.

10. How will our will in heaven be different from what it is now? (10 pts)

On earth, our will is still capable of choosing sin, rather than loving God. In the eternal state, our wills will be established and confirmed in righteousness, so we will freely love God with no danger of falling away.

## EXTRA CREDIT

11. Why would contemporary Romans not have seen AD 476 as the major turning point that we now consider it? (BONUS FOR EXTRA CREDIT. 5 Pts.)

In some ways, the Romans of that period were not so shocked by the fall of Rome, because it had already happened twice that century. Also, while the Ostrogoths remained in the land to rule Rome, they still preserved many of the structures of Roman political life and society. So the full effects of barbarian rule in Rome did not become apparent for decades or more.

12. What role did Boethius play in the revival of education in the Middle Ages?

Boethius perceived that education was declining in the Roman Empire, so in order to preserve the learning of past ages, he translated many of Plato's and Aristotle's works from Greek to Latin. Latin-speaking teachers in the Middle Ages, when they found his works, were thus able to read and teach these great philosophers even though they did not know Greek.



# Nicene Christianity

## Exam B Answer Key

### ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. How did the expansion of Roman citizenship to all inhabitants of the Roman Empire affect Roman culture? (10 pts)

As long as Roman citizenship was a privileged position, most citizens were eager to learn romanitas, the central moral and cultural values of Rome, and were dedicated to the vision of Rome as savior of the world. However, the recently conquered barbarians were more loyal to their own culture and background than to Rome's. Thus, as the ranks of citizenship were filled with citizens not necessarily enamoured with romanitas, the stability and values of the Roman Empire and culture were weakened.

2. Why is Church history central to all other history? How ought that fact to affect our interpretation of other history? (12 pts)

Church history is the central history, because God works through the church to redeem all of creation. Therefore, we ought to interpret all other history in view of its relationship to Church history.

3. What role has the Nicene Creed played in defining the church? (10 pts)

The Nicene Creed, along with the Apostles' Creed, is the most foundational statement of Christian beliefs that describes who the church is and what the church believes. Thus, while the creed cannot define for us who is saved and who is not, it can tell us who is part of the church and who believes the most basic and most commonly held Christian doctrines.



4. Why is an old great book better than a modern commentary on that book? (10 pts)

If an old book has been recognized as a great book over many centuries, it is because

the author was not just brilliant, but also effective at communicating his ideas clearly.

Therefore, a great book is likely to be more comprehensible than any modern book about it.

5. How did St. Anthony and Athanasius view the devil's power in the world? (8 pts)

St. Anthony and Athanasius believed that Christ defeated the devil through His death and

resurrection. Therefore, Christians need not fear the demons, because Christ has already won.

6. What is Augustine confessing in *Confessions*? (12 pts)

The theme of Augustine's *Confessions* is how God faithfully sought Augustine and

irresistibly drew him back to Himself even when Augustine thought himself farthest from

God and most rebellious against Him.



7. Why did Augustine write *Confessions*? (10 pts)

Augustine wrote *Confessions* so that people would know that he was a sinner, too, but that God sought him out, delivered him, and enabled him to overcome his sins by grace.

8. How was private Roman piety different from public worship of Olympian gods? (10 pts)

While public Roman worship was designed to arouse patriotism and to establish the state, private piety was a nightmare of ancestor worship and endless placation of the myriad of mundane deities.

9. How is the renewal of the world akin to our own resurrection? (8 pts)

Even as we must still pass through death, and our bodies must crumble in decay, yet God will gloriously renew and restore our bodies. So also the world must be destroyed in order that God may glorify it beyond our comprehension.

10. How will our will in heaven be different from what it is now? (10 pts)

On earth, our will is still capable of choosing sin, rather than loving God. In the eternal state, our wills will be established and confirmed in righteousness, so we will freely love God with no danger of falling away.

## EXTRA CREDIT

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12. What is the wheel of fortune? (BONUS FOR EXTRA CREDIT. 5 Pts.)

The wheel of fortune is a giant circle with people bound to the outside of the rim. Those on the top enjoy good fortune, wealth, prosperity, and honor, while those on the bottom are paupers and oppressed. But the wheel constantly turns, so no one on the wheel knows where they might be next, or when their fortunes will change.