

# THE Apostles' CREED

April 30, 2023

## OPENING QUESTION

**Who is someone in your life that you address using their title? (Title could be like “Mr,” “Mrs,” etc, or like “Coach,” “Professor,” etc)**

Consider people you know personally as well as those who are culturally well known.

As we dive deeply into the Apostles’ Creed to consider carefully what Christians across two millennia and the entire globe believe, we will move on to discussing Jesus the Son this week. The Apostles’ Creed, like any creed, is dense and compact, so each word is important! We’ll move slowly through the first few lines of the middle section this week to consider who Jesus is, what it means that He is God’s Son, and why He came to earth. Then, we’ll consider what it means to *believe* these things about Him, and not just know them!

A foundational New Testament belief is that Jesus Christ is Lord (Acts 2:36). So let’s take a look at some passages that will help us develop the meaning of the words “Jesus,” “Christ,” and “Lord.”

**READ** Matthew 1:18-25 (“Jesus”), Matthew 16:13-17 and Isaiah 61:1-4 (“Christ” (the Greek term for Messiah, a Hebrew word) and Luke 6:46-49 (“Lord”)

Discuss together what each of these words means, based on what you notice in the passages. What roles does Jesus hold in our lives?

- Which of these three is easiest to believe, to live out as true? Which is most difficult?
  - What other things in your life vie for these roles?
- What actions would reveal a *belief* that Jesus is your savior? What actions, thoughts and attitudes would support a *belief* that Christ brings God’s favor to you?

We don’t live in a time or place with kings or lords. How would having a king be different than the way we interact with our government?

- What behaviors follow the belief that Jesus is your Lord?
- What other things in your world make a bid for your loyalty, obedience or submission? (This might bend your brain a bit! It could be people, institutions, ideologies, philosophies, addictions, etc)
- How do the parts of your life look that are submitted to King Jesus? (This idea sounds very abstract; so let’s try to give it some shape and color!)

Do you know people who would (at some level) call themselves Christians, but live as if Jesus is *not* their savior and king? Why do you think this happens?

**READ** Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-7

Many of us hear or read this story at least once every year; it is easy for it to become common and over-familiar. What do you see in this story that is marvelous (worthy of being marveled at!)?

- Within this text, where do you see Jesus’ divine nature? Where is He revealed as God?
- Where does the text highlight Jesus’ human nature, His embodied reality?
- Consider all of this in light of Luke 1:37: why does the fully human, fully divine nature of Jesus require *belief*?

How might our understanding of Jesus and our belief in Him become imbalanced and incorrect if we don’t know Him as both God and man?

- How do we *live* like this is true? If this feels abstract, consider Hebrews 4:14-16 for some guidance.

## FROM THE MESSAGE

## DAILY TIME

John 18:28-19:16  
John 19:29-20:9  
1 Corinthians 15:1-28  
Acts 1:1-11  
Romans 6:1-11  
John 5:16-30

As you read each day, consider:

- What do these passages show me about God and His character?
- What do they highlight about what we **believe**?
- How can I ask God for help based on these verses?

## SIGN UP TO SERVE!

[Encounterchurch.org/serve](http://Encounterchurch.org/serve)

## NOTES AND QUOTES

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.

From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic\* church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

**What does “Lord” mean?** Consider this verse:  
18And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ...”  
Matthew 28:18

As the creed moves from God the Father to God the Son, we’re leaning on the concept of the *trinity* – that God is one unified being, in three distinct persons. If you’d like to learn more about that, consider this video:



The message focused largely on how Jesus Christ our Lord was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, an impossible birth that makes Him fully God and fully man.

Dirk discussed how we don't have to understand something fully to believe in it. Do you find it difficult to believe something as impossible and hard to explain as Jesus' incarnation?

- What other aspects of the Christian faith do you believe, but find difficult to understand?

Dirk referred to the fully human, fully God nature of Jesus as a "load bearing wall" of our faith – essential and foundational. Why is it so essential?

- "Love that is shown is love that is known." How does the incarnation show us Jesus' love?

**What does "Christ" mean?** Christ isn't Jesus' last name, but His *title*; it's the Greek word for the Hebrew term "Anointed One." In the Old Testament kings and priests (and sometimes prophets) were anointed, but in the books of the prophets, the term starts to take on the connotation of a coming Anointed One who will heal, restore, and bring the Lord's favor.

## EXTRA Read Romans 3:10-11, 21-26

Jesus' Hebrew name means "God saves." As a group, based on these verses and others you know, how would you explain what it means to be "saved from your sins," and how Jesus accomplishes this salvation?

## CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Pray for one another over the needs in your hearts and lives. Ask God to help you believe, and to help your life evidence your beliefs.

## PRAYER AND CARE

Reminders for the week ahead:

### Matthew 1:18-25

*18Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). 24When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.*

### Matthew 16:13-17

*13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

### Isaiah 61:1-4

*1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; 2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; 3to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. 4 They shall build up the ancient ruins;*

*they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.*

### Luke 4:46-49

*46 "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? 47Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: 48he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."*

### Luke 1:28-38, 2:1-7

*26In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" 29But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 30And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" 35And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. 36And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37For nothing will be impossible with God." 38And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. ...*

*2:1In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 4And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn*