

Name:

This I Believe

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE APOSTLE'S CREED

Week 2: I Believe in Jesus Christ,
God's only Son, our Lord.

Day One

If you attended a function at which Queen Elizabeth was present, she wouldn't be introduced to you as Liz Windsor. She would be presented as "Her Majesty Elizabeth II, by the grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of her other realms and territories queen, head of the commonwealth, defender of the faith." Her title is more than just a name, each part explains her identity. The same can be said of this week's portion of the Apostles' Creed. It presents God's Son to us in terms that communicate who He is and the authority He commands.

When God made the birth of Jesus known to His earthly father, Joseph, two names were given: Jesus and Immanuel (see Matt. 1:18-25). The Gospel of Matthew explains that Immanuel means "God with us" (v. 23). The account reveals that Jesus is the incarnate God. The name Jesus, a common name at the time, means "The Lord saves." When we see the name Jesus, we're reminded of our Lord as both the Son of God and the historical man who bore that name. Jesus' earthly name points us to the truth of His full humanity.

READ ROMANS 1:1-4

What evidence do these verses present for Jesus' humanity and divinity?

True belief in Jesus is at the heart of a relationship with God. The most popular verse in the Bible summarizes the gospel of Jesus, including His identity:

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. JOHN 3:16, NKJV

Begotten, to modern ears, sounds like a synonym for created. However, the Greek word from which it's translated is *monogeneses*, does not express that Jesus was created, but that He's uniquely God the Son. Jesus is equal in substance and co-eternal with the Father. Jesus has always been God but there was a moment in time when God the Son was "begotten"—He took on flesh, and dwelt with us. Even before the incarnation, the second Person of the Trinity was always—and is eternally—the Son of the Father (see Col. 1:15-20).

READ HEBREWS 1

Last week you studied some key characteristics of God. How did the writer of Hebrews describe Jesus? What does this tell you about Him?

READ HEBREWS 2:17-18

Why is it essential that Jesus is both fully God and fully man?

READ HEBREWS 4:14-16

What does this passage say we gain in Jesus' humanity?

The writer of Hebrews used the word propitiation to describe the purpose of Jesus' life and death as God and man (see 2:17). Our sin deserves the wrath of God, as we studied last week. In His love for us, God poured out His wrath on His Son for our sin, but also provided grace and mercy through Jesus. The gospel-the good news-is that Jesus took your place, accepting the punishment for your sin and making peace between you and God (see 2 Cor. 5:21).

But Jesus does more than pay for your sin. He helps you live each day in the freedom and joy of knowing that your sin has been forgiven and you have been adopted into God's eternal family. No matter what you're going through, Immanuel is with you.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, help me always remember the beautiful truth that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. Thank You that He's both my perfect substitute and my perfect Savior. Help me acknowledge His lordship through a greater obedience to Your commands. In the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord, amen.

Day Two

While it's difficult, if not impossible, to fully wrap our human minds around the reality that Jesus is 100 percent God and 100 percent man, the glorious mystery of God's love for us is clearly revealed in Christ. As the second Person of the Trinity, the Son has made a way for us to become children of God.

READ COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

What do these verses tell you about Jesus? About his authority?

Make a list:

READ MATTHEW 16:13-17

How would you answer if Jesus asked you the same question He asked Peter, "Who do you say that I am?" (v. 15)?

Journal your response.

Peter recognized that there was more to Jesus than people saw. The word Christ means "Anointed One" or "Chosen One." It has the same meaning as the Greek word for *Messiah*, the Savior who was predicted throughout the Old Testament. God opened Peter's eyes to this reality. Peter's affirmation was more than factual. It was personal. It was relational.

Nobody can believe for you. It's not enough to know what other people believe about Jesus. The conversation with Peter points out that a lot of people can believe good things about Jesus but can still be wrong about who He truly is.

What opinions, good or bad, have you heard about Jesus? What is lacking in these opinions?

The Bible includes another conversation between Jesus and His disciples about His identity and relationship with God. Once again, Jesus used language relating to a family. Notice that Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” and was then unmistakably clear: “No one comes to the Father except through me” (v. 6, emphasis added). The Apostles’ Creed is also exclusive and definitive in its wording: His only Son.

Jesus may be popular and well respected, but belief in Jesus as the only way to truly know God and to live eternally in heaven is as divisive now as it was when Jesus spoke these words.

If you believe in Jesus as the only Son of God, the only way to know the truth about God, and the only way to eternal life in heaven, then what other religious or philosophical beliefs can’t be true?

John 14:15

Faith in Jesus is more than agreeing that He’s fully God and fully man. Belief in Jesus is even more than agreeing that He’s the only way to know God and to live with Him forever. Saving faith is belief that leads to action.

Think about the different things going on in your life. What do you need to do to obey Jesus in each area of your life?

Prayer

Spend time declaring the truth about Jesus, praising Him for who He is and what He’s done for you. Thank God for revealing to you the truth about His only Son.

Day Three

True Christian belief is more than an opinion about Jesus. It's surrender to His lordship as Savior and King. He's the promised Messiah, the only One who can save us. Therefore, Jesus is worthy of all that we are and all that we have.

Early Christians who professed Jesus as Lord were doing more than claiming to know some things about Jesus; they were declaring allegiance Him as King. The Roman law required everyone to acknowledge Caesar as Lord. Christians who proclaimed that Jesus was Lord were singled out as disloyal to Rome and the prevailing culture. Their disobedience brought condemnation and persecution. Furthermore, the Jewish culture rejected belief in Jesus as the Christ and only Son of God. To believe otherwise was to be rejected by the religious community. Professing the lordship of Christ is central to the gospel in every age because in doing so, Christians declare that Jesus is the true King and Lord of all.

The statement "I believe in ... Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord" brings symmetry, clarity, community, and counsel to the Christian life and witness.

1. SYMMETRY

Time for a gut check. Legitimate, life-or-death persecution has been a part of Christianity since Jesus was crucified. Millions of Christians live with the reality of persecution right now. Though it may be easy to say you're committed to your faith in Jesus, consider your life. Are you trying to claim Jesus as your Savior without submitting to Him as Lord and King? Jesus Himself will not allow us to do this. It's a lie of our self-centered culture to believe we can have the benefits of salvation without the cost of following Jesus.

2. CLARITY

If Jesus is who He says He is, you can't be indifferent to that claim. Is He the way, the truth, and the life or not (see John 14:6)? Is He the only Son, fully God and fully man, or not? Is He Savior and Lord, or not? Like the disciples, you must decide what you believe about Jesus. To be clear, deciding what you believe doesn't mean deciding whether it's true. Truth is truth. You're responsible for what you'll do now that you've heard the truth about Jesus.

How well do your actions line up with what you say you believe about Jesus? Mark a point on the scale that represents your answer:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all

Completely

These are some of the most sobering words in Scripture. We can't take faith and obedience lightly. They're inseparable parts of the Christian life. For Christ to be Savior, He must also be Lord. There's no middle ground. Jesus said we're either in or we're out. If we merely pay lip service and don't submit to Him as King, then we're not a part of His kingdom

3. COMMUNITY

When you declare, "Jesus is Lord," you join the voices of every believer from the past two thousand years and around the world today. You join your brothers and sisters in Christ. The Apostles' Creed is specific when it says Jesus Christ is "our Lord," not just "the Lord." A confession of personal faith is a commitment to the community of faith.

4. COUNSEL

Jesus said to believe in Him and promised He will return when our eternal home is ready (see John 14:1-6). He's coming back. When He does, He's coming for those in true relationship with Him. We've been given the truth. Live each day for the sake of Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, our Lord.

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

Prayer

Ask God to give you a desperate burden for reconciliation. In prayer, repent of your sin, submitting to Christ as Lord. Also pray that God will equally burden you with a sense of urgency for others to be reconciled to Him through saving faith In Jesus.

