

***I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST***  
**The Apostles' Creed – Week 4**  
**By Andy Manning**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Theology is the study of God. And there are different branches of theology. Bibliology is the study of the Bible. Hamartiology is the study of sin. Pneumatology is the study of the Holy Spirit. Ecclesiology is the study of the church. Soteriology is the study of salvation. Eschatology is the study of last things. But the most important type of theology is Christology, the study of Christ. Why? Because your Christology – your view of Christ – will determine your eternal destiny.
2. **Al Mohler** “On the Day of Judgment, we will be defined by our Christology. We will meet the Christ either as Savior, or we will meet him as Judge.”
3. What you believe about Jesus will determine whether you go to heaven or hell.
4. Over the years many false teachings about Jesus have challenged the Bible's teaching about Jesus:
  - i. The Jehovah's Witnesses, which is a form of modern-day Arianism, teach that Jesus is not God; He is God's first creation. They do not worship Jesus.
  - ii. Mormonism (Latter-Day Saints) believe that Jesus is a god, but not eternal, and not equal to God the Father. He is a created being who was conceived when God the Father came down and had sexual relations with Mary. He was at one time just the same as you and me, sinful and merely human, but eventually earned his godhood.
  - iii. The Jesus Seminar of the 1980s and 1990s was a group of scholars who did not believe that the New Testament was the word of God. They didn't believe in the deity of Christ, or in His miracles. However, they believed that Jesus was a real person in history, and that there was some truth about Jesus in the New Testament. They completely rejected the Gospel of John, and they spent their time in the Synoptic Gospels – Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They

went through every word of Jesus and story about Jesus, and they voted on what was true about Jesus, and what was not. They each had four colored marbles. For example, they would read a statement made by Jesus, and if you were sure that Jesus said it, you would put a red marble in the box in the center of the table. If Jesus probably said it, you would put a use a pink marble. If you were sure that Jesus didn't say it, you would use a black marble. If Jesus probably didn't say it, you would use a gray marble. Then they published their own color-coded Bible. As you can imagine, there wasn't much red. **Al Mohler** said, "In the end the only evaluation that can be made of the Jesus Seminar is that these scholars have figuratively lost their marbles."

5. With all of these false teachings about Jesus, how can we learn the truth about Jesus? The truth is found in the Bible, and a great summary of the truth about Jesus is the Apostles' Creed. The Apostles' Creed is an ancient summary of Christian beliefs that goes all the way back to the second century. It is a summary of what Christians of all denominations have always believed.
6. Let's begin by reading it together. (This version of the Apostles' Creed comes from the website of the Episcopal Church.) "I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth; I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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."
7. We have already studied what the Creed teaches about God the Father. Now we are moving to what the Creed says about Jesus. We are getting into the largest part of the Creed. It says more about Jesus than anything else. Today we are going to focus on the following words: "I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the

power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.” In this statement we can find five truths about Jesus Christ.

## II. FIVE TRUTHS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

### 1. His name is Jesus.

- i. The creed says, “I believe in Jesus...”
- ii. Because it is a sacred name to us today, nobody would call their child Jesus (although they often do in Mexico). But among the Jews it was a very common name. At least five high priests were called Jesus. In the works of Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, there are about twenty people named Jesus, and ten of them lived during the time of Christ. In the New Testament there are three people named Jesus. There was Jesus who was called Justus (Colossians 4:11) and the sorcerer who was called Bar-Jesus (Acts 13:6). And then there was Jesus Christ. The name was popular because it is the Greek form of Joshua, and Joshua was one of the main heroes of Judaism. A book of the Bible is named after Joshua.
- iii. Where did Jesus get His name? This goes back to the Christmas story, to the first Christmas. Joseph and Mary were engaged, but it was discovered that she was pregnant. Joseph was planning to divorce her, but an angel appeared to him in a dream.
- iv. **Matthew 1:20-21** 20 But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”
- v. This answers two questions.
  1. Where did Jesus get His name? From God. An angel told Joseph what to name Him.
  2. Why did God name Him Jesus? “Because he will save his people from their sins.” The name “Jesus” literally means “the Lord saves,” and that’s why God sent Jesus – to save us from our sins.

- vi. **Luke 19:10** For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.
- vii. This is why Jesus is called our Savior (Titus 1:4).
- viii. The Bible says that God created you for a relationship with Him, but you have sinned against God, destroying that relationship. Your sin is so serious that you deserve eternal separation from God in hell. And there's nothing you can do to save yourself. But God loves you so much that He sent Jesus to save you. Jesus died on the cross for your sins, and if you will repent of your sins and believe in Jesus, God will forgive you, and restore your relationship with Him, and give you eternal life.
- ix. Christians have always believed that Jesus is our Savior. The most popular symbol for Christianity is the cross. But a close second is a fish. Do you know why? The Greek word for fish ICHTHUS. In Greek it is five letters – Iota (I), Chi (X), Theta (Θ), Upsilon (Υ), Sigma (Σ). Those five letters form an acronym, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior." In the early days of the faith, Christians were often persecuted and had to be very careful. If they saw a painted fish on the door of a house, they knew they would be welcome there. Sometimes they would draw one side of a fish in the dirt, and if the other person completed the fish, they knew it was safe to talk about their faith in Jesus.
- x. Not only do Christians believe that Jesus is the Savior, but that He is the only Savior. In a sermon to the Jews, Peter said the following:
- xi. **Acts 4:11-12** This Jesus is the stone rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone. There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.
- xii. Jesus is the only way to be saved from the punishment and penalty of sin. He is the only way to heaven. He is the only way to God. He is the only Savior.
- xiii. When you say that you believe in Jesus, you are affirming that you believe that Jesus is the Savior of the world.

## 2. His title is Christ.

- i. The creed says, “I believe in Jesus Christ....”
- ii. Christ is not Jesus’ last name, like Manning, or Hunnicutt, or Fauchaux. Christ is a title. It is the Greek word (Christos) for Messiah (Hebrew, Mashiach). When you say that you believe in Jesus Christ, you are saying that you believe that Jesus is the Messiah.
- iii. This is what the New Testament writers affirmed:
  1. **Luke 2:11** [When Jesus was born, the angels announced to the shepherds,] “Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”
  2. **Mark 8:27-29**  
 27 Jesus went out with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?”  
 28 They answered him, “John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets.”  
 29 “But you,” he asked them, “who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.”
  3. **John 11:26-27** [After Lazarus died, Jesus said to Martha,] “Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”  
 “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world.”
  4. **John 20:31** But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God,, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
- iv. What does it mean that Jesus is the Messiah? The word literally means “anointed one” – as in one who is anointed with oil. In Old Testament Israel, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed with oil. This indicated that the person has been singled out by God with special powers and functions. Over time the term came to refer to a future figure who would be prophet, priest, and king, and who God would send to save Israel. In the time of Jesus the Jews were eagerly waiting for the Messiah to appear. Still today

the Jews are waiting for the Messiah. But the Bible says that Jesus is the Messiah.

- v. The Old Testament prophets said three main things about this coming Messiah:
  - vi. First, the Messiah would be a Davidic king.
    - 1. The prophets said that he would be a king, and a descendant of David.
    - 2. **Psalm 89:3-4** The LORD said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn an oath to David my servant: 'I will establish your offspring forever and build up your throne for all generations.'
    - 3. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy. He was a descendant of David. The New Testament often calls Jesus the "Son of David (Mt 1:1)." Both of His parents, Joseph and Mary, were descendants of David (Mt 1:16; Lk 3:23).
    - 4. The book of Revelation says that Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of Lords (Rev 19:16).
  - vii. Second, the Messiah would be the divine Son of Man.
    - 1. The prophet Daniel had a vision of heaven in which he saw "a son of man" coming on the clouds of heaven and approaching God. He was given an everlasting kingdom, and the people of every nation and language worshiped Him (Dan 7:13-14).
    - 2. When Jesus came along, His favorite title for Himself was Son of Man. He used it 81 times.
    - 3. When Jesus was arrested, the high priest said, "Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." Then Jesus quoted Daniel.
    - 4. **Matthew 26:64** "You have said it," Jesus told him. "But I tell you, in the future you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."
  - viii. Third, the Messiah would be the suffering servant who would die for sins.
    - 1. Isaiah 53 is a prophecy about the death of the Messiah.

- 2. **Isaiah 53:5** But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds.
- 3. In the New Testament, the apostle Peter said that Jesus was this suffering servant.
- 4. **1 Peter 2:24** He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds, you have been healed.
- ix. When you say you believe in Jesus Christ, you are saying that you believe that Jesus is the Christ. He is the Messiah. He is fulfillment of the Old Testament messianic prophecies. He is the Davidic King whose kingdom will last forever. He is the divine Son of Man who deserves our worship. He is the suffering servant who died for our sins.

### 3. He is God's only Son.

- i. The Creed says, "I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son..."
- ii. The New Testament often refers to Jesus Christ as God's Son.
- iii. When the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness he said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread (Mt 4:3)."
- iv. The demons knew Jesus was the Son of God. When they saw Jesus they shouted, "What do you have to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time (Mt 8:29)?"
- v. After the disciples saw Jesus walk on the water they said, "Truly you are the Son of God (Mt 14:33)."
- vi. **Mark 1:1** The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- vii. When the angel appeared to Mary he said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. (Lk 1:35)"
- viii. John the Baptist said boldly about Jesus, "I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God (Jn 1:34)."
- ix. Jesus often referred to Himself as the Son of God, especially in John.

- x. **John 6:40** For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”
- xi. But what does it mean that Jesus is the Son of God?
- xii. In one sense, “Son of God” seems to be another reference to the Messiah. It points to Jesus’ identity as the Messiah.
  - 1. Often the two terms – Son of God and Messiah – are paired together.
  - 2. **Matthew 16:16** Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”
  - 3. When the high was interrogating Jesus he asked, “Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God (Mt 26:63).”
  - 4. This may be because Psalm 2 is written about the Messiah, and it calls the Messiah God’s Son.
  - 5. **Psalm 2:7** I will declare the Lord’s decree. He said to me, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”
- xiii. But in another sense it refers to Jesus’ unique relationship with the Father. All Christians are children of God (Jn 1:12), but the Bible refers to Jesus as God’s only Son.
- xiv. **John 3:16** “For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”
- xv. The Greek word for “one and only” means unique, or one of a kind.
- xvi. How is Jesus God’s unique Son? In three ways.
  - 1. Jesus is God’s son in eternity.
    - a. For you to become God’s child, first God had to create you, and then God had to adopt you when you put your faith in Jesus (Jn 1:12). But Jesus has always existed as God’s Son.
    - b. **John 1:1-2** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning.
  - 2. Jesus is God’s Son in nature.



- a. You only have a human nature, but Jesus is fully human, and fully divine. He has all the same attributes as God the Father – omnipotence, omniscience, etc.
  - b. **Hebrews 1:3** The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact expression of his nature, sustaining all things by his powerful word.
- 3. Jesus is God’s Son in character.
  - a. As a Christian your goal is to imitate God’s moral attributes like love and holiness, but you can only do so imperfectly. Jesus, on the other hand, is just like God.
  - b. **Hebrews 4:15 (CEV)** Jesus understands every weakness of ours, because he was tempted in every way that we are. But he did not sin!
- xvii. In a third sense, the title “Son of God” points to His divinity. It means that Christ is God. The Jews knew this too.
- xviii. **John 5:18** This is why the Jews began trying all the more to kill him: Not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God.
- xix. They knew that when Jesus said He was the Son of God He was claiming to be equal to God (see also John 19:7).

#### 4. He is our Lord.

- i. The Creed says, “I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.”
- ii. The New Testament often calls Jesus Lord.
- iii. Peter declared this in his first sermon. **Acts 2:36** “Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”
- iv. Paul affirmed it. **Philippians 2:10-11** so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow— in heaven and on earth and under the earth— and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- v. **Romans 10:9** If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

- vi. Many scholars believe that “Jesus is Lord” is the earliest known confession of faith, and was probably used at the first baptisms. Before they were baptized, a new convert would have to confess, “Jesus is Lord.”
- vii. What does it mean? It has two meanings.
- viii. First, it means that Jesus is your master.
  - 1. The word “Lord” literally means master, the owner of a slave. This is why New Testament authors often call themselves slaves of Christ Jesus and even say that all Christians are slaves of Christ.
  - 2. To say that you believe that “Jesus is Lord” is to say that Jesus is your master. He is in charge of your life. He has complete authority over you, and you submit to Him in everything.
  - 3. There are many Christians who misunderstand this about Jesus. They believe in Jesus as Savior, Messiah, Son of God, but not Lord. They don’t want to repent of their sins and obey Him. But Jesus is not just the Savior, He is the Lord. It would be like a man who wanted to marry a woman, but he didn’t want her two young children. Sorry. The children are part of the package. If you want the woman, you have to take her kids too. If you want Jesus as Savior, you have to accept Him as Lord.
- ix. Second, it means that Jesus is God.
  - 1. In the Old Testament God’s personal name is Yahweh. By the time of Jesus, the primary language of the Roman empire was Greek, even among the Jews. So, the Jews translated the Old Testament into Greek. The Greek Old Testament is called the Septuagint. When they translated God’s personal name – Yahweh – into Greek, they used the Lord, or *kurios*. So, when the New Testament authors say that Jesus is Lord, they are saying that Jesus is God.
  - 2. And that’s what you are saying, too, when you say that “Jesus is Lord.” He is God.

## **5. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.**

- i. The Creed says, “He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.”
- ii. This part of the creed is affirming the virgin birth of Jesus.
- iii. This doctrine is stated very clearly in Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-38, and in Isaiah 7:14.
- iv. **Matthew 1:18-21** 18 The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit. 19 So her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly. 20 But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”
- v. Mary and Joseph were engaged, and she got pregnant. But she was still a virgin. Joseph was about to break things off when an angel told him that she hadn’t been unfaithful, but the child was conceived by the Holy Spirit.
- vi. Why is the virgin birth important? Two reasons.
- vii. First, it affirms the identity of Christ as truly God and truly man.
  - 1. Because Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, He was fully God; and because He was born of Mary, He is fully human.
  - 2. Why does that matter? To die for our sins, Jesus had to be human. But for one man to pay for the sins of the whole world, He would have to be God.
- viii. Second, it affirms the sinlessness of Christ.
  - 1. The Bible says that everyone who descends from Adam receives a sin nature – a heart bent toward sin. But Jesus didn’t descend from Adam. His Father is God.
  - 2. Why is the sinlessness of Christ important? If Christ was a sinner, then He couldn’t die for our sins because He would have to bear His own punishment. But because He was sinless, He could pay for our sins.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

1. The most important branch of theology is Christology, because what you believe about Jesus will determine your eternal destiny.
2. So what should Christians believe about Jesus? Not in the Jesus of Mormonism, or Jehovah's Witnesses, or the Jesus Seminar. As Christians you should believe what the Bible teaches and is summarized by the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary."