

“Jesus is LORD” - John 1.1-14 - Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs

The largest portion of the Apostles’ Creed is what it says about Jesus. As a congregation, we will have some who believe all of these statements, and some who are seeking or questioning that may not believe some of these statements. Many of us may also have some things that we believe are important about Jesus that are not even mentioned in this creed. Please know that most of the sermons I preach are about Jesus, and to try to preach one that says it all is impossible. So, this will be a “highlight.”

In the first line of the creed, we have three titles for Jesus – the Christ (or Messiah), Son of God, and Lord. At the time when Jesus walked on the earth the Jews were anticipating the coming of the **Messiah** or “Anointed One” to save them from Roman oppression much like Moses had saved their ancestors from slavery in Egypt. For the early church, Jesus was the “anointed one” who saved us from our sins. (There is a whole other line in the creed and sermon in this series on that.) In the gospels, he is anointed in the stories of various women who poured oil on him before the Last Supper and the Crucifixion.

Son of God denotes a significant relationship with God, which is similar and yet different to our relationship though we also see ourselves as children of God. But here the idea is expanded with a later phrase about being conceived by the Holy Spirit. In the creed we see the evidence of what later would be called the Trinity – one God in three “persons.” Terms that have been used to describe the trinity are Father, Son and Holy Ghost, or Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

Some of you might be surprised to know that Jesus is older than you think. He was before we knew he was. We know the Christmas story about his birth 2000 or so years ago, right? However, in the Gospel of John we realize that God has no birthday. God is eternal and that means Jesus, as the Son of God, is also from before the beginning. *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his home among us. We have seen his glory, glory like that of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.* (John 1.1;14) Jesus is the eternal Word of God. But in all of eternity for 33 years we believe that he became flesh and lived among us as Jesus of Nazareth. And this is the piece I want to pick up later about what I believe, because in this creed nothing is said about what Jesus said and did as a part of his ministry among us! It jumps right from his birth into his suffering, death, and what happened after his death.

The third title for Jesus is **Lord**, which Adam Hamilton in his book describes as the one in charge as in the terms: Lord of the Manor, Lord Mayor, or “My Lord”, as subjects would say and bow before kings. For the early church, Jesus is the one described by the ancient prophet Isaiah as “King of kings and Lord of lords.” And Hamilton says that this is the defining story for us as the Apostle Paul wrote: *Because if you confess with your mouth “Jesus is Lord” and in your heart you have faith that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* (Romans 10.9) The question for each of us is who is the lord of your life? Is it you or do you bow to a higher authority – Jesus, as your Lord? We are Christians because we believe in and follow Christ. The creed goes on to lift up the theological importance of being born of a virgin. As God Jesus could not “sin” and the ancient Jewish belief was that children born the natural way were “born sinners.” Suffering under Pontius Pilate was big, but I would have thought tempted by Satan

would have been more important to mention but notice the creed does not say anything at all about the devil!

The greatest affirmation about Jesus in the creed for me is that he rose on the third day. This whole series is leading us to Easter and the Resurrection. Jesus who was alive and was God before his birth was alive and God after death, too! Jesus reveals that there is abundant life beyond this earthly life. And in John's Gospel he said: *Don't be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. My Father's house has room to spare. If that weren't the case, would I have told you that I'm going to prepare a place for you? When I go to prepare a place for you, I will return and take you to be with me so that where I am you will be too.* (John 14.1-3) I am following Jesus here on earth, and someday I am following Jesus home.

So, for you what is not in this creed? What stories of Jesus' life and teaching do you want to add? I believe in the Golden Rule and the Great Commandment. I believe in the parables, miracles, and the Last Supper. I believe what Jesus believed was the answer to John the Baptist's inquiry about whether or not Jesus was the Messiah they had been waiting for: *Then he replied to John's disciples, "Go, report to John what you have seen and heard. Those who were blind are able to see. Those who were crippled now walk. People with skin diseases are cleansed. Those who were deaf now hear. Those who were dead are raised up. And good news is preached to the poor.* (Luke 7.22)

Here is what I wrote in my creed about Jesus: **I believe in Jesus Christ, who as God was also human and lived as one of us for a while. He called us to follow him in his teachings and his actions. He died and rose again; he ascended back into heaven and will come again to bring us home.** What do you believe? Write it down and share it with others. Alleluia and Amen.

Jesus Asked the Disciples

Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs 2/21/24

Jesus asked the disciples,
"Who do people say I am?"
Images in parables,
A shepherd seeks a lost lamb.

Jesus high and lifted up,
Jesus with us as a friend,
Jesus in the bread and cup,
The images have no end.

Take some time to discern,
For yourself, who is Jesus?
You will be blessed when you learn,
From him who came to teach us.