

The Apostles' Creed

Study Guide

LESSON
THREE

JESUS CHRIST



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STUDY GUIDE

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How to use this lesson and study guide

- **Before you watch the lesson**
 - **Preparation** — Complete any recommended readings.
 - **Schedule breaks** — Review the outline and the time codes to determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions in the outline.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
 - **Notes** — Use the Notes section to follow the lesson and to take additional notes. Many of the main ideas are already summarized in the notes, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
 - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
 - **Review Questions** — Questions on the basic content of the lesson. Answer review questions in the space provided. Review questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
 - **Application Questions** — Questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Outline

- I. Introduction (1:01)
- II. Divinity (2:55)
 - A. Son of God (4:53)
 - B. Lord (13:13)
- III. Humanity (18:12)
 - A. Experiences (19:27)
 - 1. Generation (20:24)
 - 2. Body (24:49)
 - 3. Soul (27:02)
 - 4. Resurrection (29:17)
 - B. Office (32:03)
 - 1. Old Testament Background (32:43)
 - 2. Fulfillment in Jesus (38:28)
 - C. Nature (44:22)
- IV. Work (57:29)
 - A. Humiliation (58:26)
 - 1. Incarnation (59:37)
 - 2. Passion (1:07:47)
 - B. Exaltation (1:17:36)
 - 1. Resurrection (1:19:05)
 - 2. Ascension (1:23:12)
 - 3. Enthronement (1:26:06)
 - 4. Judgment (1:28:45)
- V. Conclusion (1:31:40)

Notes

I. Introduction

No other figure in history has been as widely admired or had as much impact on society as Jesus of Nazareth.

II. Divinity

Christians have always intended words like Christ, Son of God, and Lord to indicate Jesus' divinity.

A. Son of God

“Son of God” is often used for beings that are not divine:

- Angels (Job 1:6; 2:1)
- The nation of Israel (Ex. 4:22; Hosea 1:1)
- Kings of Israel (2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 2:7)
- Adam (Luke 3:38)
- Believers (Matt. 5:9, 45; Luke 20:36; Romans 8:14, 19; Gal. 3:26)

Jesus is God's son in a unique way.

Jesus as the divine and eternal Son of God is reflected in the doctrine of the Trinity.

Ontological perspective:

- Equal in power and glory to the Father and Holy Spirit
- Infinite, eternal, unchangeable
- Same divine attributes
 - Wisdom
 - Power
 - Holiness
 - Justice
 - Goodness
 - Truth

Implications for the Christian life:

- acknowledge and worship Jesus as God
- pray to him just as we do to the Father and Spirit
- know that God himself has redeemed us from sin

III. Humanity

In the early church it was common for people to question the humanity of Jesus.

A. Experiences

Several of Jesus' experiences prove that he was truly human.

1. Generation

Conception and Birth:

- unusual details
 - Conceived by the Holy Spirit
 - Mother was a virgin

A genuine human being had to suffer physical divine judgment to atone for the sins of humanity.

3. Soul

Human beings consist of a mortal body that houses an immortal soul.

The words “soul” and “spirit” refer to all the inner, non-physical aspects of our being as a whole.

While Jesus’ body would be placed in the grave, his spirit or soul would be in the hands of God the Father. (Luke 23:46)

4. Resurrection

The resurrection proves that Jesus was a real human being because it included the reunion of his real human body with his real human soul.

B. Office

The word Christ is actually the title of Jesus' office, similar to words like "king" or "judge."

1. Old Testament Background

Christ:

- *christos* (Greek)
- *mashiach* or messiah (Hebrew)
- anointed one
 - anyone God appointed to serve him specially

 - sons of David

 - great king descended from David

Implications for the way we live:

- We have an effective human mediator between us and God.
- Jesus has constituted a new human race.
- We can approach the throne of grace with confidence.

IV. Work

A. Humiliation

The Son of God caused his glory to be veiled and hidden from sight, and subjected himself to suffering and indignity.

1. Incarnation

Incarnation refers to Jesus permanently taking on a human nature.

The work of incarnation accomplished three things:

a. Davidic King

Jesus could only claim David's throne if he had a human father who descended from David.

b. High Priest

The incarnation gave him the mercy and sympathy he needed to be an effective high priest.

c. Atoning Sacrifice

Jesus had to be human in order to die in place of his people.

2. Passion

The term passion refers to Jesus' suffering and death.

Jesus' suffering was necessary to teach him obedience, and to commend him to God the Father.

It was Jesus' death that atoned for our sin and accomplished our salvation.

Jesus underwent the normal human experience of death. The Apostle's Creed says, "He descended into hell."

Interpretation:

- Jesus was buried (unlikely)
- hell: underworld that contains the souls of the dead
- Jesus soul descended into the underworld between his death and resurrection.

Nature of hell:

- Sheol (Hebrew—Old Testament)

- Hades (Greek—New Testament)

The most likely meaning is that Jesus' human soul descended to the place of the departed spirits.

Jesus' passion shows us what it means to be truly human in a fallen world.

B. Exaltation

Christ's exaltation was more than an unveiling of his veiled glory.

1. Resurrection

Christ's resurrection was just as important to our salvation as his death.

We were raised in new life through his resurrection.

2. Ascension

Jesus was taken bodily into heaven.

Jesus ascended to:

- prepare places for believers in heaven (John 14:2-3)
- send the Holy Spirit to empower the church (John 16:7)
- complete the work of atonement that he began on the cross (Hebrews 8-9)
- intercede for us (Hebrews 7:24-25)

3. Enthronement

Jesus is our great human king with a throne in heaven that sits to the right of the Father's great throne.

Jesus is also spoken of as a priest who intercedes for his people.

4. Judgment

Jesus will render royal judgment against those who have violated his laws and not respected his kingship and kingdom.

Good news: Those who are united to Christ by faith will receive an eternal blessing and inheritance.

Bad news: Those who are not found in Christ will bear the full brunt of God's wrath.

V. Conclusion

5. How does the fulfillment of the office of Christ point to his humanity?

6. Discuss Jesus' human nature and its relationship to his divine nature.

7. Why was the incarnation necessary? What did Jesus accomplish by it?

8. Why did Jesus subject himself to arrest, suffering, and crucifixion?

9. Explain the phrase in the Apostles' Creed "he descended into hell."

10. Discuss the four parts of the exaltation of Jesus.

Application Questions

1. How can Jesus' divinity give us greater trust in him?
2. How does Jesus' humanity allow him to identify with us?
3. How should a proper understanding of the Trinity, together with Christ's divinity and humanity, influence the way we pray?
4. How does the divinity of Christ help us understand God's love for us?
5. What does Jesus' possession of a real, physical body suggest about the way we ought to treat our own bodies?
6. In what way can Jesus' role as our mediator give us confidence before God without fear? In what ways is it proper for a Christian to fear God?
7. How can the humiliation that Christ endured for us encourage us as we endure trials and struggles in this life?
8. How is our new life in Christ generated by his resurrection from the dead?
9. Why is the church better off with the presence of the Holy Spirit than with the physical presence of Jesus?
10. How can the Creed comfort us as we look forward to the final judgment?
11. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?