

March 8, 2026

Creed Series #4

“I Believe in Jesus”

Luke 1:26-35

**Intro:**

Today we are moving ahead in our exploration of what Christians believe from God the Father to God the Son.

As a quick reminder, the purpose of this sermon series is to help us to identify what unifies us as Christians in terms of our faith. There is much that would seem to divide us (just look at the very many denominations and sub-denominations in the world today!) but there certainly must be central points that we can all agree on, the ones that could and should be the primary points of faith for any Christian. These are what unites us as one body in Christ Jesus. I will not be able to answer all the points of division in the few weeks of time that we have, but hopefully you will come away with a clearer understanding of where you can “hang your hat of faith”.

So, this week we move on to the person of Jesus Christ, the Son, God incarnate.

Understanding what we believe about Jesus should be the easiest point for most Christians. After, all, it is belief in Jesus that identifies us as Christians. If anyone would call themselves Christian, and then deny Jesus in any way, I would question their claim of being a Christian. We simply cannot be called Christians without believing in Him.

As I am following the outline of the Apostles Creed for this sermon series, in these next two weeks we will look at the “who” of Jesus, and leave the “what” of Jesus – meaning his role in salvation, for later in the series.

## **The Divinity of Christ:**

Jesus is Immanuel – God with us. He is the Son of God. He is the incarnate God. As we read last week from Colossians, he is the visible image of the invisible God. To put it in more earthy language, Jesus is God with skin on – although that doesn't quite convey the fullness of Jesus as fully human and fully divine.

There are two parts to the nature and understanding of who Jesus is – he is fully God (divine) and fully human. This doesn't mean that he somehow has a split personality or that he is half and half. It is one of the great mysteries of Jesus, and our faith, that He can be both fully divine and fully human. Yet, it is belief in this truth that we as Christians can stand firmly together on. It is the beauty of this unique internal relationship that allows Jesus to stand in the gap between God and humanity and act as the perfect payment for the price of sin that we as full humans should have to pay.

This morning, we are going to look at Jesus as fully God, and next week we will explore Him as fully human.

Baptist pastor and theologian Bruce Milne opens his exploration of the divinity of Christ with these words:

“Here we arrive at the staggering truth which lies at the heart of the Christian religion, that Jesus Christ while truly human was also true God. This is one of Christianity's distinctives. Jews and Muslims also acknowledge one supreme God, and revere the patriarchs and prophets of the OT, but in the claims made for Jesus Christianity stands alone.”<sup>1</sup>

The Apostles' Creed seeks to demonstrate the truth of Jesus' divinity first, and then the truth of his humanity. Jesus' conception was something that took place outside of the normal rules for childbirth. It was necessary for God to engage a different process if Jesus was to fully enter into the human state and still maintain full divinity. As we look at the passages we read earlier from Luke and John, we

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Milne, *Know the Truth: A Handbook of Christian Belief*, 2nd ed (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 165.

see the Gospel writers pointing to the mysterious truth about Jesus' divine connection. Luke sets the stage with the words from the angel Gabriel that Mary will conceive and give birth, but not through the regular means. Jesus' conception will entirely be a work of the Spirit of God operating outside of nature's normal laws. This was not just a simple matter of God replacing the role of a human male, providing the male chromosomes needed to produce a child. Such a process would have produced a God/human hybrid – a half-God, half-man being that is closer to what one might find in Greek and Roman mythology. No, God's Spirit settled on and in Mary and infused the baby with the fullness of the divine. Jesus was conceived in this manner, then went through the full process of human birth – being formed in Mary's womb for nine months, and finally being born in normal human fashion. This was necessary for Jesus to be fully human. In order to be able to fully stand in the gap between humanity and God, Jesus needed to fully experience all of humanity while remaining divine. That experience included being birthed, and then growing up and aging through the different stages of childhood to adulthood, experiencing temptation, and knowing joy and sadness.

Unfortunately, it is easier for people to grasp the humanity of Jesus than to grasp the divinity of Jesus. This was a problem for the church through the ages, specifically seen in this past century through the Jesus Seminar, which sought to place the importance of the humanity of Jesus over the divinity of Jesus.

Of course it is easier to place Jesus as a human being, and His humanity is what we will focus on next week. After all, there is evidence of his specific placement in the timeline of history. It is harder to understand Him as also being fully divine. This point requires faith and the acceptance that there are mysteries of God that we will just not understand.

The creeds are written not only to confirm what we believe, but also to provide a point of anchor for us when belief seems to be on more shaky ground. The Apostles' Creed provides the simple line, "I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary." This statement should have been enough, but over time questions arose that were not

satisfied by that statement. The Nicene Creed, and ultimately a combination of the Nicene Creed and the Constantinople Creed sought to expand the statement so as to leave no opportunity to question that Jesus is also God. This is what that statement reads:

“We believe in one God, the Father all mighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible;  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten from the Father before all time, Light from Light, True God from True God, begotten not made, of the same substance as the Father, through whom all things were made.”<sup>2</sup>

John tries to make the same connection in the prologue to his Gospel, which we read earlier. Jesus, the Word, was with God and is God in the beginning, and then that same Word, Jesus, also became human. In doing so he did not lose any of his divine nature, but also took on human nature.

### **Conclusion:**

Trying to understand this great mystery of Jesus’ nature is an impossible task. Quite frankly, it doesn’t make sense. How can the invisible divinity become visible divinity? How can the infinite exist at the same time as the finite? This is where we need to call on faith. This is where we as Christians need to be able to stand together in agreement that this is a primary point of our faith. Do we believe that Jesus is God’s son? Do we believe that he is at once both fully divine and fully human? If we don’t then there is a problem, for then everything we understand about forgiveness and salvation falls apart.

So, yes, we must say that we believe in Jesus Christ and all that entails. We must submit our limited human understanding to the divine purpose and plan of God. We must have faith that there is truth in the mystery that we cannot understand. And in doing so, we stand together as Christians.

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<sup>2</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why It Matters* (Westminster: The Crown Publishing Group, 2007), 37.