

04: WE BELIEVE | THE NICENE CREED

I | ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made;

- This section on Jesus is the longest part of the creed.
- It answers the most important question that can ever be asked, “Who is Jesus?”
- Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” (Matt. 16:15). People were saying many different things about him.
- Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
- It’s the same today, people have different ideas about Jesus. Some say he was a great spiritual and moral teacher, a prophet, a spiritual guide, or a revolutionary.
- Jesus, however, never gave us the option to say any of those things about him.
- C.S. Lewis’s “trilemma” argument in Mere Christianity. Jesus is either lunatic, liar, or Lord.
- According to Jesus’s own words, we cannot affirm him as anything other than what he claimed about himself—that he is the eternal Son of the Father.
- The Nicene Creed affirms and identifies Jesus as Lord and as the Son of God.

Jesus’s self-identification with the Father:

- **John 8:58** Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”
- **John 10:28-33** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one.” 31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?” 33 The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.”
- **John 5:18** This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.
- **John 5:19-29** The Authority of the Son is the same as the authority of the Father.

He is Lord

- Lord, Gr. κύριος (kyrios)—owner, lord, master, ruler, one who has legal authority over a person or sphere.
- The designation “kyrios” had a very important understanding in the Greco-Roman world of the NT church.
- The idea of “lord” was one having both the legal power to do things, as well as the moral authority to impose upon others.
- In the Roman Empire, the emperor’s were increasingly using the term “kyrios” to refer to their legal status and authority as emperor being raised up to the divine.
- Declarations from early Christians that Jesus is ‘kyrios’, were a direct challenge and threat to the established rule of the Empire.
- **Philippians 2:9-11** Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.
- **Romans 10:9-13** because, if you **confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord** and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; **for the same Lord is Lord of all**, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. 13 **For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

He is Lord of Creation

- **Colossians 1:15-17** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For **by him all things were created**, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
 - Jehovah’s Witnesses use this verse as a proof text to say that Jesus had a beginning, that he was a created being.
 - **Psalms 89:27** Speaking of David, the Lord says, “And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.”
 - David wasn’t the firstborn in his family.
 - What God is saying that David will be over all others.
 - Firstborn means preeminent. Jesus who made all things, is the preeminent one. He is above all of his creation as its Lord.

He is Lord of the Nations

- Colossians 1:16...whether **thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities**...

- **Psalm 22:28** For kingship belongs to the Lord, and **he rules over the nations.**
- **Matthew 28:18** And Jesus came and said to them, “**All authority** in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

He is Lord of the Church

- **Colossians 1:18-20** And he is the **head of the body, the church.** He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
- Head, Gr. κεφαλὴ (kephalē)—leader, person who is in charge, the superior.

He is Lord of the Sabbath

- **Luke 6:5** And he said to them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”
- God rests to show his authority over creation (Gen. 2:2-3).
- Jesus is demonstrating his connection to Divinity and his authority as Creator.
- Christianity rests on who Jesus is. He is not merely a teacher, or a good example to follow, or a prophet, He is the eternal Son of God.
- To confess Jesus is Lord is not merely a statement of doctrine but a declaration of allegiance, hope, and worship.
- The church throughout the ages stood firm on this truth, even in the face of opposition and fierce persecution.
- Everything hinges on Christ’s identity.
- We join our voices in declaring we believe in one Lord Jesus Christ.

PERSONAL APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

- What competing views of Jesus do you see most often in our culture? How can you respond to them with truth and grace?
- What does it mean in practical terms for you to confess “Jesus is Lord” in your daily life?
- Where do you need to be reminded that Jesus not only created all things, but also “holds all things together” (Col. 1:17, including the details of your own life)?
- What difference does it make in your view of the church the Jesus, not pastor, traditions or culture, is the head of the church?
- How does confessing “one Lord Jesus Christ” give you hope, courage, and assurance in a world full of competing ideologies, powers, and truth-claims?

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth;
of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made;
who for us and for our salvation
came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary,
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried;
and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures,
and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified;
who spoke by the prophets;
and we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church;
we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;
and we look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.