

ause I go to My Father.
Father and the Father in Me,
sake of the works themselves,
to him who believes in Me, the

THE APOSTLE'S CREED

what christians believe



Believe Me and I am in the Father and
or else believe Me for the sake of the
Most assuredly, I say to you he who
works that I do he will do also; and
these he will do because I say so.

Booklet 1 - Studies 1-5

TERM 2 – 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The Apostle's Creed is an ancient statement of faith that finds its origins in the 2nd century AD, as a baptismal confession of faith.

Sometime around the 6th – 7th Century AD the creed had found its current form, and millions upon millions of Christians have recited this creed to affirm their faith in the Lord Jesus, throughout the world.

Whilst the creed itself is not the inspired word of God, it highlights a number of core truths that all Christians believe. It helps protect us from heresy on a number of core truths from God's word and, if learnt by heart, can be a wonderful source of comfort and strength in the Christian journey.

As we work our way through the Apostle's Creed together, try to learn the creed by heart. Whilst rote learning is not popular these days, having these biblical truths written on our hearts in a way we can easily recall is a great blessing as we journey with Jesus.

STUDY 1

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth

Starting Prayer: Pray that God would grow you in a deeper relationship with him as you dig deeper into the biblical truths of the Apostle's Creed.

For Starters: What part of God's creation most takes your breath away?

Read Psalm 33

1. How does this psalm describe God's relationship to his creation?
2. What are the implications of God being the creator of heaven and earth, as opposed to the universe just springing into being of its own accord?
3. In the time the Apostle's Creed was formulated, one of the dominant worldviews was Gnosticism which was marked by a denial of created things and a view that the only good things were 'spiritual' not 'material'. What does the concept that God is the creator of heaven and earth say to that?
4. If God really is all-powerful, how should we respond to him?

5. Why do you think it's significant that God created the universe by his word, and not some other way?

Read Matthew 6:5-14

6. Since God is not 'male' why does he reveal himself as 'father'? What does it mean for him to be 'father'?
7. How should the knowledge that God as father shape our self-understanding and our prayers?
8. What causes people to doubt that God is a loving father, and how would you respond to those doubts?
9. How does someone become a child of the heavenly father?
10. How do the concepts of God as both 'father' and 'creator' relate to each other?

Pray:

STUDY 2

I believe in Jesus Christ,
God's only Son, our Lord

Starting Prayer: Pray that God would grow you in a deeper relationship with him as you dig deeper into the biblical truths of the Apostle's Creed.

For Starters: Outside the Bible, who is an example of an excellent leader? Why are they excellent?

1. How would you define the word 'Christ'?
2. How would you define the word 'Lord'?

Read Psalm 110

3. What stands out to you in this passage?
4. Is there anything strange or unclear to you in this passage?
5. What is the difference between "the LORD" and "my lord"? And how does this psalm describe the relationship between the two of them?
6. What does this psalm teach us about the Christ?

7. How does this fit with what we see in Jesus in the New Testament who seems rather gentle in comparison to the warrior described in Psalm 110?

Read Acts 2:29-36

8. What point is Peter making about Jesus from Psalm 110?
9. Who are the enemies which God is making a footstool for Jesus' feet?
10. What then does it mean to describe Jesus as 'the Christ'?
11. What does it mean to describe Jesus as 'the lord'?
12. Why is it good for Jesus to be your lord, as opposed to you being your own lord?
13. What does it mean for Jesus to be your lord? (Be specific: lord of your leisure, your sexuality, your relationships, your career, your wallet, etc.).

Pray

STUDY 3

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary

Starting Prayer: Pray that God would grow you in a deeper relationship with him as you dig deeper into the biblical truths of the Apostle's Creed.

For Starters: How do people react to the idea of the “virgin birth” of Jesus and why?

Why is it important for Christians to believe that the virgin birth is an historic event?

Read Matthew 1:18-25

1. What does the story of Jesus' miraculous conception reveal about who he really is?
2. Are the circumstances of Jesus' birth really so hard to believe, given that the scriptures also reveal that God created all things? Discuss

Read John 1:1-14 (Speaking of Jesus' coming into the world)

3. What key things do we learn about Jesus in these verses?

4. What does Jesus' pre-existence (v.1-3) tell us about the importance of the incarnation (Jesus taking on human form)?
5. How has the world responded to Jesus' coming?
6. What do verses 12-13 reveal about Jesus' purpose in coming into the world?

Read Galatians 4:1-7

7. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be born as one of us?
8. How does Jesus' coming into the world lead to our adoption to sonship?
9. What does verse 6 teach us about the nature of God?
10. According to verse 10, what does faith in Jesus make us and what benefits / blessings do we gain?

Pray

STUDY 4

suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried

Starting Prayer: Pray that God would grow you in a deeper relationship with him as you dig deeper into the biblical truths of the Apostle's Creed.

For Starters: What do you think most people outside of church might think about...

Who Jesus is?

Why Jesus died on the cross?

Read John 18:28-19:16

1. Who was Pilate and why did the religious leaders take Jesus to him to be crucified?
2. What did Pilate conclude about the claims against Jesus?
3. Why did Pilate have Jesus flogged and then crucified?
4. What do we learn about Jesus' kingship in these verses?

5. What does the exchange of Jesus with Barabbas reveal about the significance of Jesus' death on the cross?

Read John 19:28-30

6. What was Jesus' referring to when he uttered his last words "it is finished"?

Read Romans 3:19-26

7. What do we learn in these verses about the common state of humanity before God?
8. How can we be "declared righteous" before God?
9. What does it mean that Jesus is a "sacrifice of atonement"?
10. Why did God send Jesus to die in our place and for our sake? Consider especially verses 25-26.

Pray

STUDY 5

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose from the dead

Starting Prayer: Pray that God would grow you in a deeper relationship with him as you dig deeper into the biblical truths of the Apostle's Creed.

For Starters: Have you ever experienced something really good coming from a really bad situation? Share with each other.

1. What happened to Jesus between Good Friday and Easter Sunday?

Read 1 Cor 15:1-28

2. What stands out to you from this passage?
3. Is anything unclear or confusing to you in this passage?
4. The New Testament Scholar, N. T. Wright, speaking of the shocking claim of the resurrection of Jesus in the ancient world said: "Christianity was born into a world where its central claim was known to be false. Many believed that the dead were non-existent; outside Judaism, nobody believed in resurrection." So, what does resurrection mean, and how is it different from alternative views of what happens after death?

5. Why is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead so important for the Christian faith?
6. Some more modern readers have said that Jesus didn't literally rise from the dead, rather he 'rose in the hearts of his disciples'. How would you respond to this?
7. What does the resurrection of Jesus mean for us and for the whole creation?
8. What would you say to someone who finds it hard to accept the truth of Jesus' resurrection?

Read 1 Cor 15:29-32

9. To what extent does the truth of Jesus' resurrection drive Paul's mission?
10. To what extent are you animated by the hope of the resurrection?

Pray

NOTES:

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The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;

he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven,

and is seated at the right hand of the Father;

from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal* (catholic) Church,

the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.