

## **Apostles Creed – Creator and Son**

The Creed says that fundamental to our faith is that God the Father is Maker of Heaven and Earth. Of course, creation involved the Triune Godhead, for what one Person does, the others also do. God the Father was the architect of creation, the One who spoke it into being. John 1 tells us that God the Son was the agent of creation. It says “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” God the Spirit was the action in creation, the One hovering over, brooding over, bringing life. Architect, agent, action. As if God says, “Switch on the light, the Son flips the switch, and the Spirit connects the circuit and provides the power. The Triune God is the creator.

Why is this a fundamental of the faith?

In most pagan religions, you either had gods who created gods all the way back to some kind of primordial chaos out of which the gods sprang. Matter was itself eternal, without beginning; it had just always been there. In other words, something impersonal was always there, and then persons sprang out of that. Matter came first, then minds.

Ironically, modern Darwinism and cosmology teaches the same thing. Those theories say there was always the quantum vacuum, it just always was. And from that dead, impersonal nothingness, came the universe, and by a long series of accidents, conscious minds came into existence. Matter first, then minds.

But the biblical account is the opposite. The Bible says there was no eternal matter. Instead, there was an eternal Mind, there was a Person without a beginning. From that Person came the cosmos and all matter. Mind came first, then matter. The Bible, in Genesis 1:1 places God before the beginning. God is not one more event in the universe, one more thing that has a cause. God is uncaused. God's existence is not dependent on anything else or caused by anything else. Not only that, but God is the only being whose existence is absolutely necessary. All other beings didn't have to exist. But to even use the word 'exist' is to assume the self-existent God, the uncaused Cause.

When Paul challenges the pagans at Athens, what he emphasises is that the true God of the Bible is not at all like their gods, who are just superhuman. He says, <sup>24</sup> "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.

<sup>25</sup> "Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. (Acts 17:24-25)

We confess God is the Creator because it means He is the self-existent, self-sufficient, eternal One. In the Bible the Creator is not simply the top predator in a chain of living things. He is separate from his creation, transcendent, infinite, not needing it, or changed by it, but existing in perfection without it.

So actually, everyone believes something was eternal. You just have to decide what is more plausible: self-existent matter, or a self-existent Person.

But it means something else. If God is the Creator, and He is a Person, then everything that is made is the craftsmanship of a Person. For example, when you receive an automatic SMS from some corporation on your birthday, you don't typically start weeping tears of joy. We know it was a computer, and something fairly impersonal. To receive a hand-written card from your friend means something totally different. It was written by a Person, in their own hand, intended for you. It is full of meaning and love. If the world sprang out of mindless, random stardust, then everything in the world, including all the people you meet are actually impersonal and meaningless. They are as random and as dead as they say the stars and asteroids are. Everything is meaningless and there is no morality.

If the world was created by a Person, then all of creation is like that hand-written card. Every molecule was made intentionally, with purpose. Nothing is accidental. It is all there on purpose. It was given as a gift. It has meaning. It is meant. Do you realise that there is no such thing as dead matter? Yes, there are degrees of life and consciousness, but even the rock, even the breeze, even the light has God's fingerprints, God's handwriting on it. It is meaningful. There is really no such thing as “dead” matter. Nothing is dead if it was made by a living Person.

Creation is not an accident, or a mass-produced object made by robots. Creation is like a poem – made with meaning by a person. In fact, when Paul tells us that all men are without excuse because they can see what God has made, he says “<sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, “ The word for made is *poeima*. It is where we get the word *poem* from. It means artful, deliberate creation.

Do you know what that means? It places every human being under a moral obligation. Everything you see was a poem made for you and all other thinking, feeling humans. There is no obligation for you to do anything when a machine sends you a spam email. But if a hand-written card in an envelop with your name written on the outside is put under your door, the sense of obligation is great. This is something with meaning from one person to another. The creation is irreducibly Personal.

In fact, one of the motives behind trying to increase the age of the earth or the cosmos is that if we get it into the billions and billions, then it seems so remote as to be impersonal. A more recent creation feels like a more personal creation, like finding the cement outside your house's front gate is still wet – someone was here. People deny creation because it is the only way to deny the Creator.

“Adding more time really doesn't explain the bewildering glory, design, variety, or even the impossibility of it assembling itself. The actual problem remains exactly what it was before.” “If it is impossible for me to walk across a swimming pool, I cannot solve this problem by inching out onto the surface of the pool very, very slowly.” – Doug Wilson

But when we study creation, more than ever we are finding it is made up meaning, with design, with intention. Indeed, the deeper we've gone we have found that it actually has information, letters, codes, which we call DNA, which is the absolute mark of a Mind. Indeed, in each of your cells, there is your complete DNA, a literal library of information. Smaller than a full-stop on a page. Uncoiled, it is about 2 meter long. You have trillions of cells, which means the uncoiled DNA in one human being is twice the diameter of the Solar System. You are a library of micro-coiled information that stretches from the Sun past Neptune.

“This is why, once you have acknowledged the bare fact of absolute creation, the problems of a young earth fade to almost nothing. The only problem with a literal six-day creation is how it possibly could have taken so long.” – Wilson

This is why the Bible says Creation shouts, it proclaims the self-existent, eternal Creator, separate and transcendent from His creation, and yet lovingly superintending it. And this is just the visible creation. Colossians 1 tells us He created an entire dimension of things invisible to us, intelligences who occupy dimensions above our four, with substances and realities beyond our periodic table and light spectrum, and time-space.

So when we confess that we believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, we are proclaiming the truth in a self-existent eternal God, who made all things out of nothing with purpose, meaning and love.

We believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord

After having said that we believe in God the Father almighty, maker of Heaven and earth, the very next phrase is "I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord".

Now the first thing you should notice is that the same belief that we are giving to God the Father, we are giving to Jesus Christ. The third I believe statement refers to the Holy Spirit, showing that we are meant to see these three as co-equal, deserving of the same worship.

But this one line, Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord contains four truths about which Jesus it is we believe in. There are many Jesuses out there, the Jesus of Islam, the Jesus of New Age religions, the Jesus of the cults, Mormons and Jws. There is the Jesus that rap stars thank when they receive their grammy for a song that is filled with sin and wickedness. So we need to sort out exactly what Jesus the creed is talking about.

The first thing to realise is that Jesus Christ is not a name and surname. Jesus is his name, Christ is a title. More properly it is Jesus the Christ. But let's begin with His name.

Jesus, which is the Greek form of His Hebrew name, Yeshua or Joshua, which means Yehovah is salvation. The first thing we are confessing is that we believe that this Person was a true human being. He had a human name. He was born, ate three meals a day, outgrew his clothes every few years, played with the other children in Nazareth, learnt Torah at the synagogue, and became a carpenter under his adopted father, Joseph. He was truly human, experiencing all the growth, change, pain and limitation of being human. He was probably known as Yeshua ben Yosef, or perhaps Yeshua ben Miriam. This person we confess was historical, born in a certain place, actually lived there, worked, and grew up there.

Christ is His title. It is Christos, which is Greek for Anointed One, or Messiah. Jesus the Christ. Yeshua HaMashiach. Messiah is the ultimate Chosen One. He is selected above all other humans as a mediator between God and man. Messiah is the only one who occupies three mediatorial office. Prophets are mediators: they announce God's Word to man. Jesus is the ultimate Prophet, Hebrews 1 tells us that God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, (Heb. 1:1-2). Jesus is the Word, God's ultimate communication of Himself to man.

Priests are mediators: they make atonement and intercession to be able to bring man into God's presence, representing God to man and man to God in prayer and sacrifice. Jesus is the ultimate High Priest, who gave Himself to be the sacrifice, the veil, the Temple, as well as the Priest who enters the Holy Place for us with His own blood.

Kings are mediators: they bring God's government and laws to man, ruling in the fear of God. Jesus is the ultimate King, the one who has defeated death and sin in a holy war, and risen and ascended to sit at God's right hand, awaiting His final coronation.

To believe in Jesus the Christ is to believe that of all the humans that have ever lived, Jesus of Nazareth was the Chosen One. He is the uniquely qualified mediator between God and man as prophet, priest, and king. Only He can tell us who God is, bring us back to God, and rule us in the fear of God.

But all this is possible because of the third thing in that phrase: His only Son. Jesus is God's only Son. Now all through church history, false teachers have taken the idea of son to mean someone slightly less than God. Perhaps the best creature God ever made, or perhaps the divine being that God made through whom He made the world. Maybe Jesus is God's son the way we become God's son, humans that are saved and then eventually glorified or divinised. Jesus was a man, they say,

who was especially chosen and faithful, and now is promoted to special status, and we can follow in His footsteps.

But that is not what Jesus said it meant for him to be the Son. Jesus said that people should honour the Son the way the honour the Father. He said the Father was in Him and He was in the Father. He said no one knows the Father except the Son and vice versa, and all to whom they choose to reveal themselves. He said the Father had committed all things into His hands. Paul makes it clear that the Son is the focal point of worship and salvation.

This is not what you say about an angel, or a special human. When the Bible says Jesus is the Son, it means the person of Jesus is not only fully human, but fully God. He is God the Father's eternal Son. His being the Son does not mean He came into being. His being begotten does not mean He has an origin, a beginning. That would make Him a creature. Being the Father's Son is not a way of accounting for His origin; it is a way to account for His distinction from the Father. The Son would not be the Son if it were not for the Father. The one called the Father would not be the Father without the Son. And their communion would not be communion without the Spirit. This is why we speak of the Son as eternally generated. Not a beginning; but eternally the Son of the Father, just as the first person is eternally the Father of the Son. This is how we distinguish between the persons of the Godhead, not how we account for their origin. God has no origin. That's what it means to be God.

All that God is in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

But it does seem that the Son is the main link between an infinite God and His finite creation. If God's desire was to be in union with His creatures, that could only happen if God somehow united with creation. And so the Son, completely infinite and eternal, added to Himself a true human nature. The natures did not mix and become something new. Instead in the one we call Jesus, the one we call the Son, the one we call the Christ, we have all that is human and all that is deity in one Person. Everything that is human is found in Jesus according to His human nature. And everything that is God is found in Jesus according to His divine nature.

So Jesus is the bridge from man to God in two ways: He is the God-Man, so we can know God even as we know Him the man, and because He dealt with our sin on the cross.

That's the reason for the last phrase: our Lord. You can agree with the three titles: Jesus, fully human, Christ: the true Messiah, and Son, fully God, but not have done anything about it. But the last phrase makes it personal: our Lord. All of this is to come down to a choice: to pledge your faith to Him or not. If you want union with God, if you want restored worship, restored relationship, eternal life, then you must come through Jesus. But not Jesus the weak sentimental figure who coddles your sin. No, Jesus the King, who conquers sin and death, but then demands that you lay down your arms, forsake your sin, give up on your own righteousness and surrender to Him.

<sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. (Rom. 10:9)

Not the Jesus of Judaism or Islam or Hinduism, where He is Jesus not the Son and not the Christ. Not the Jesus of the cults, where He is not Christ or not the Son. Not the Jesus of libertinism and pop religion where He is not the Lord.

Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.