

THE APOSTLES' CREED: THE VIRGIN BIRTH  
*Luke 1:26–35*

**Tonight's focus:** “And [I believe] in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.”

**Trinitarian shape** of the creed now shifts to **focus on the Son**, the second person of the Godhead. The focus on the Son is appropriate since approaching God through Christ is what **distinguishes Christianity** from other religions (John 14:6; John 1).<sup>1</sup>

Two areas of focus in this statement: who Jesus is, and how he became man.

### 1. Who is Jesus?

The creed identifies Jesus as “Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.”

- **Jesus** is the name given to God the Son to represent his saving mission: “you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Matt 1:21).
- **Christ** is not Jesus' last name, but a title (Gk. *christos* from Heb. *mashiyach*), “Messiah,” representing Jesus' role in God's redemptive purposes.
  - Prophet:
  - Priest:
  - King:
- **Lord:**

Rom 10:13, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Acts 2:36, “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

- **“his only Son”**: Jesus alone is the eternal and natural son of God.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Barrett, sermon on the Apostles' Creed.

<sup>2</sup> Heidelberg Catechism 33.

## 2. How did Jesus become man?

The second person of the Godhead added to himself a human nature by means of the Virgin Birth.

- OT anticipation: Isa 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”
- NT fulfillment: Matt 1:18–25; **Luke 1:26–35**.
  - The Holy Spirit enables Mary to conceive a Son apart from the ordinary physical relationship. Jesus’ humanity is miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit
  - The child Mary gives birth to is the Son of God. He is a real human, and he is the second person of Trinity. WSC 21: “Who is the redeemer of God's elect? The only redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.”
  - Matt 1:21, 23 identifies Jesus as the Savior and Immanuel, respectively.

### Significance of the Virgin Birth:

1. A sign: God is still with his people.<sup>3</sup>
2. Highlights the essentially supernatural character of Jesus and the gospel.<sup>4</sup>
3. Humanity needs a redeemer from outside; we cannot save ourselves.<sup>5</sup>
4. Proof deity.<sup>5</sup>
5. The Virgin Birth is essential for orthodoxy.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Donald Macleod, *The Person of Christ* (Contours of Christian Theology; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 36–37.

<sup>4</sup> Macleod, *The Person of Christ*, 37.

<sup>5</sup> Macleod, *The Person of Christ*, 37.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 552.

<sup>6</sup> Kevin Bauder, “Thinking About the Gospel, Part 8,” (In the Nick of Time; available at <http://sharperiron.org/2007/08/07/thinking-about-the-gospel-part-8>).