

The Apostles' Creed

And in Jesus Christ, His Only Son

February 5, 2023—Sermon Discussion Guide

The entire Apostles' Creed contains 19 phrases, 11 of which are about Jesus. That Jesus is the center, the heart, and the focus of the Creed is obvious. The Creed declares, in no uncertain terms, that belief in Jesus, in who he was and what he did, is the cornerstone of Christianity.

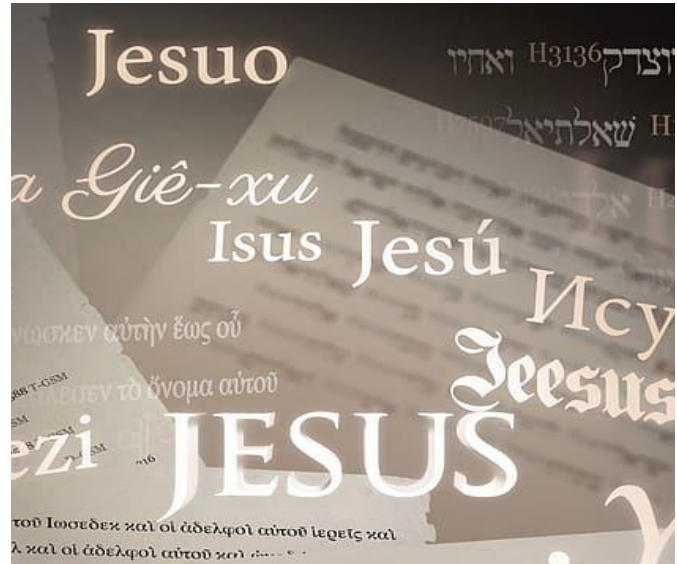
Name

What's his name?

Jesus - English

Yeshua (יֵשׁוּעַ) - Hebrew

Joshua - (Ἰησοῦς) - Greek.



Yeshua means “God is savior.” This was a common name at the time of Jesus. Many boys were named Yeshua after the original Yeshua (Joshua) in the Bible who took over after Moses died and led the Israelites into the promised land. You can read more about him in the book of Joshua.

It is interesting that although we think of the name Jesus as unique, it was not at all an exceptional name in first century Israel. It reminds us that when Jesus was born, he would have appeared to the people around him as an ordinary child—unexceptional, typical, almost invisible. Perhaps this was partly for his protection so that Herod didn't recognize him and kill him. But perhaps it also reminds us of Jesus' humility and God's sacrifice by coming to earth not in the flesh of a prince in a palace, but as an ordinary, poor country boy.

- What is special for you about Jesus' name?

Title

Christ (Greek - *christos*, Hebrew - *mashiah*) is not a name, it is a title or office. It means “the anointed one.” In the history of the Jewish people only three types of people were anointed—prophets, priests, and kings. Jesus may have come from humble beginnings with a humble name, but his title was a declaration of his importance, his rank. By claiming the title “the Christ,” he is fulfilling all

three ministries. He was the greatest of the prophets—surpassing Elijah. He was a high priest in the order of Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20, Hebrews 5:5-6). He was a king eclipsing even David. The Jewish people knew what the claim meant!

- How does Jesus fulfill all three anointed roles? Give specific examples.
- What should the title the Christ have meant to a long suffering, patiently waiting Jewish nation? Why would they reject him?

Personal study: If you were to choose a name and a title for yourself that was significant and appropriate for you, what would they be and why? Why do you think God told Mary and Joseph to name her son Jesus?

His Only Son

Jesus was not just a God-inspired man—he was fully God. Jesus was not a superior angel—angels are created beings and Jesus was not created, he always existed. Jesus is not a man inhabited by the spirit of God—Jesus is God incarnate. Jesus is part of the Trinity, the three-in-one God. And if your mind is in knots, welcome to the club! To quote Doug Hoglund, “Theologians and church leaders wrestled with this from the first through the fifth centuries.”

Jesus was fully God and fully man. He was God in human flesh. He was the physical revelation of what it means to be truly divine and truly human. Jesus is the only way we can truly know God.

- Why is it not enough to call Jesus God-inspired, or a superior angel, or a gifted prophet? How might you explain the difference to someone new to Christianity?

Jesus called God “my father.” Jesus called himself “the son” not a son. Do you get the distinction? Their father-son relationship was unique because it was a chosen relationship for the purpose of revealing how God relates to us as a father, and how we should relate to God as his children. Jesus chose to submit to his father as we should submit to God. Jesus prayed to his father as we should pray to God. Jesus knew God because he was God. Their relationship was eternal and ours can be too when we believe.

Read John 1:1-18.

- How do you feel about Jesus being present at creation? Have you thought of that before?
- What do these verses tell you about the purpose for Jesus being born into the world?
- Who does John the Baptist say Jesus is?
- How does Jesus set an example of how we should relate to and interact with God?

Personal Study: Who is Jesus? Use these verses to understand better who Jesus is: Matthew 11:27 and 17:5, John 1:14, Colossians 1:13-23.

My take away: Make a list of the characteristics of a parent/child relationship that you believe God wants you to have with him.