



## **Luke 2:7 and Psalm 2:7**

New International Version of the Holy Bible

# **CHRIST, THE GOD-MAN**

**“ . . . she gave birth to her first-born, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke 2:7**

**I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.” Psalm 2:7**

The Apostles' Creed is the faith by which the Christian Church lives. That's why all three articles are of utmost importance. If, however, we were to designate one of these as the most important it would no doubt be the Second Article because this article speaks of Jesus Christ. The Bible speaks of him as the only foundation on which anyone can build a successful life. Jesus Christ is also considered the chief cornerstone without which the Christian church cannot exist.

This morning in our series of sermons on the creed we come to this very important person of the holy Trinity, namely, Jesus Christ. Those of you who have studied the Bible know that Jesus Christ is totally unique. No one else in the whole world is like him. He stands all alone. Our Father in heaven is God and God only. We are human and only human. But Jesus Christ is both God and human man. It's because of this uniqueness that people have always had difficulty accepting Jesus Christ for what he really is, denying either that he is God or that he is a human man.

The Pharisees and Sadducees denied the deity of Christ. Others in Christ's time who saw his miracles were convinced that he was God but then denied that he was a true man. They claimed he just seemed to have

flesh and blood – God *appearing* in the form of a man like angels who sometimes appear in human form. By the time St. John was an aged man this false doctrine must have been quite common for in his epistle he makes his special mention: **“This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the anti-Christ, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.” I John 4:2-3**

In our time I’m not aware of anyone who seriously challenges the humanity of Christ except those who claim that the stories about Christ are myths and need not be taken literally nor be considered factual. Denying the inspiration and perfection of Scripture they have become agnostics. They know nothing of God even though they call themselves Christian ministers or professors. In general, people in the church and even outside the church believe that Jesus Christ, who lived in Palestine some 1900 years ago, was a true human being.

It’s the deity of Christ which men generally doubt and theologians in high places attack. Rabbi Morris N. Kertzer writes: *“Jews do not accept the deity of Christ as the ‘only begotten son’ of God. We recognize him as a child of God only in the same way that we are all God’s children.”* (What is a Jew? P. 200) We would, of course, expect a Rabbi who rejects Jesus as Savior to deny his deity. What ought to shock us is that there are some ministers in the Christian church who promote the same false doctrine. For example, John A.T. Robinson, a bishop in the Anglican Church, declares flatly: *“Jesus never claimed to be God. We cannot be sure what title Jesus claimed, and we would be wise . . . not to rest our faith on them.”* (Honest to God, p. 773) As in the days of Christ, so today some deny that Jesus was a human man, others that he was God.

We, however, who have been led to faith by the Spirit, confess that Jesus Christ is both. With the Christian church through the ages we confess: *“I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.”* The explanation was written by Luther and is confessed by Christians: *“I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary is my Lord.”*

You will note that in the creed we confess that Jesus Christ is begotten of the Father but also born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus is the Son of God but also the son of a woman - he is both God and man. This faith in Christ as God-man is not simply built on faith as some maliciously suggest. This faith is rooted in the Holy Scriptures and written by the apostles and prophets through the inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit.

## **I – Why We Believe Jesus Christ was a Man**

Speaking of our Savior’s birth, St. Luke writes: **“ . . . she gave birth to her first-born, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke 2:7**

Ever since we could walk and talk most of us have heard this magnificent story. There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that the entire world should be taxed. They all went to register, including Joseph and Mary. It was a long trip all the way from Nazareth to Bethlehem. It was a difficult trip because Mary was about to have a Baby. By the time they arrived in Bethlehem all the inns and houses were filled. In a stable she gave birth to Jesus, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger. Of course it’s a miracle! Jesus, the eternal Son of the Father, became a man – a creature like we are, with a body of flesh and bones,

with human desires and feelings. He was in every way what we are, except that he had no sin.

No, this isn't fantasy or a fairy tale. This Child was born, for angels appeared to Shepherds and informed them of this baby's birth. When they were told this baby was their Savior, they hurried to Bethlehem and found Mary, and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger.

Later, when he became of age, hundreds of people saw him, heard him preach, touched him, saw him eating, sleeping, and even crying. As the apostle Paul says: **“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.”**  
**Hebrews 4:15**

Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate and was scourged and this caused him to bleed; when they forced him to carry the cross, he broke down; when they crucified him, he cried in agony; when they pierced his side with a sword, water and blood came forth. According to the Scriptures, he was born, he lived, he suffered, he died, and was buried. Jesus was a true human being.

Why was it necessary for our Savior to become a man? Angels have no parents to obey or neighbors whom they might love as themselves. The Ten Commandments don't really apply to them or to God. That's why Jesus became a human man - so that being under the Law, he could keep everyone of the commandments which man had broken. He kept the commandments for everyone and suffered punishment that we deserved. That's why St. Paul writes: **“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”**  
**Galatians 4:4-5**

Why was it necessary for our Savior to become a human man? **“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23** All who rely on observing the law are under curse, for it is written: **“Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” Galatians 3:10** If we are to be delivered from death and the curse of the law then someone had to be cursed and die for us. Since God and the angels cannot die, Jesus in love left the glories of heaven to become a man so he could do it. St. Paul sums it up beautifully: **“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.” 2 Cor. 8:9** That’s why we sing so jubilantly during the Christmas season:

**To this vale of tears he comes,  
Here to serve in sadness,  
That with him in heaven’s fair homes,  
We may reign in gladness.  
We are rich, for he was poor;  
Is not this a wonder?  
Therefore praise God evermore  
Here on earth and yonder.**

## **II – Why We Believe Jesus Christ Is God**

Praise the Lord, our creed is based on Scripture!

**1. We confess Jesus is God because the Bible calls him God.** Our text says: **“You are my Son; today I have become your Father.” Psalm 2:7** These words of the psalmist are repeated twice in the New Testament, namely, at the baptism and the transfiguration of our Lord. When Christ came of age and declared himself to be God’s Son and Savior

of the world some people who had known him ever since he was a little Boy in Nazareth asked: **“Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?”** **John 6:42** The Father answered that question once and for all when he shouted with a voice of thunder when Christ was baptized: **For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”** **2 Peter 1:17** No, this is not Joseph’s son; he had nothing to do with Jesus’ conception and birth. **“This is my son!”** said the Heavenly Father.

Thomas is known by many as the *“doubter.”* Even though all the disciples told him that they had seen the risen Christ, he still would not believe. A week after Thomas’s denial, Christ appeared and asked Thomas to touch his hands and wounded side. Then Thomas exclaimed: **“My Lord and my God!”** **John 20:28** Christ accepted that title because he is both man and God.

**2. We confess Jesus is God because the Bible gives him such attributes that belong only to one who is God.** You and I keep changing. But Christ does not change for Bible says: **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”** **Hebrews 13:8** We are limited to one place at a time. We can’t be in church and at home at the same time. Yet Christ could say: **“And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.”** **Matthew 28:20** We might be able to lift one or two hundred pounds or with the help of a machine move a small mountain but Christ declares boldly: **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”** **Matthew 28:18** According to Scripture, Jesus is much more than we are, for he is God. Only God is almighty, everywhere present, and unchangeable.

**3. We confess Jesus is God because he proved his deity by his works.** The Bible tells us that God the Father created the world, preserves

the world, can forgive sins, and will eventually judge the living and the dead. And who hasn't heard of Jesus' miracles? I know that through medicine and science we can do wonders and that through prayer miracles are still performed today so that the lame walk and the blind see. But who has ever in his own might changed water into wine like Christ did at the wedding of Cana of Galilee? Who has walked on water as Christ did on the Sea of Galilee? Who has picked an ear that was cut off and just put it back on completely whole as Christ did for Malchus in the Garden of Gethsemane? And these are just his minor miracles.

If today you go east from Jerusalem to a little town called Bethany, anyone will gladly show you the tomb of Lazarus. It's empty. According to the Holy Scriptures Lazarus was a good friend of our Savior. Lazarus' two sisters, Mary and Martha, were friends of Christ as well. Christ frequently spent a night in their home and ate at their table. While Christ was on one of his preaching tours Lazarus became sick and before Jesus arrived he died. In fact, he was dead for four days. When they were about to open the tomb, Martha said: "**. . . by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.**" **John 11:39** Yet, when Jesus asked Lazarus to come back to life, he did. Jesus Christ is true God.

Then there is Christ's own resurrection. Some years ago a certain Mrs. Mary in Hubbard, Texas mailed out circulars inviting people to come to her and she would foretell a person's future for five dollars. We all know that she can't foretell anyone's future. But our Savior not only foretold his resurrection but according to his promise he also raised himself from the dead three days after his burial. When the women who were his friends came to the tomb on Easter morning, the tomb was empty and the angel said: "**He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.**" **Matthew 28:6** If you go outside the walls of Jerusalem and look at the tomb where they claim to have buried Jesus, you will find it empty still. He is risen from the



dead. He is all that he claimed to be: the heavenly Father's only begotten Son, true God as well as true man.

That's why even the angels worship him and Jesus himself could tell the Pharisees, who claimed to worship the Father even though they rejected Christ: **“. . . that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.” John 5:23**

But some say: *"All this talk about Christ being not only man but also God just bores me. What difference does it make?"* It makes the difference between your salvation and damnation, the difference between life and death, the difference between heaven and hell.

Why was it necessary for our Savior to be God? Our Savior had to be God because no man could ever redeem us – not even if he were perfect. We can see this in the following example. A teenager was sent to prison because he had violated the law repeatedly. His father came to the judge and pleaded for his release. The father said: *"You know that I am almost a perfect citizen and never willfully broke any of the laws of the land."* *"I know that,"* replied the judge, *"but your obedience doesn't make up for the crimes of your son."* That is the same as our relationship to God. Even if a father somewhere had kept God's commandments perfectly, that still couldn't save his son or anyone else. Our redemption required the God-man, Christ Jesus. Jesus was God and is above the law - but he put himself under the law to fulfill it as our substitute.

Why was it necessary for our Savior to be God? Our Savior had to be God so that he could overcome sin, death and the devil. Show me any person who has never sinned, who can fight the devil with only human might. What person can save their life from death, either here or in eternity? Because Christ was God, he could and did accomplish all three. The Bible says that Christ abolished death, destroyed him that had power

of death which is the devil, and won for us an everlasting life by his own resurrection. Because Jesus Christ is the God-man, true man and true God, we can confidently confess: *"I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil."*

Christmas is a wonderful time of the year. Yet what makes Christmas, Christmas is that: **"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."** **John 3:16** What makes Christmas, Christmas is that fact that the Babe in the manger is a real baby, totally unique, both God and man. Both texts are true: **" . . . she gave birth to her first-born, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."** **Luke 2:7** and **" . . . and the Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father."** **Psalm 2:7**

*Oh, come, all ye faithful, triumphantly sing;  
Come, see in the manger our Savior and King;  
To Bethlehem hasten with joyful accord;  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!  
True Son of the Father, he comes from the skies;  
To be born of a virgin he doth not despise.  
To Bethlehem hasten with joyful accord;  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*