

Appendix VII — The Work of Christ According to the Apostles’ Creed

Another way of studying the work that Christ did and continues to do is by studying the Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed. The Apostles’ Creed does an excellent job of describing what we call Christ’s “humiliation” and his “exaltation.” When speaking of Christ’s work, we define those terms as follows.

- ✓ **DEFINITION: humiliation** — *the first part of Christ’s ministry, when he usually chose not to make full use of his heavenly power and glory so that he might live and die in a lowly way*
- ✓ **DEFINITION: exaltation** — *the part of Christ’s ministry beginning with his victorious descent into hell when he again made full use of his heavenly power and glory*

The following chart breaks the Second Article of the Apostles Creed into sections so that we can study and review Christ’s work.

The Second Article	Notes
<p>I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,</p>	<p>This statement is a confession of who Christ is — God’s only Son, and our Master</p> <p>Matthew 26:63,64 But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”</p> <p>“Yes, it is as you say,” Jesus replied.</p>
<p>who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,</p> <p>suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.</p>	<p>It is important to note that Christ’s conception and birth don’t mark the beginning of Christ’s humiliation. His human birth and human body didn’t limit his power or his glory. For if that were the case, Christ wouldn’t have kept his body after his resurrection. But when he came into this world, Christ willingly laid aside his power and glory. His humiliation, therefore, begins with the <i>manner</i> in which he was born. The king of the universe became the son of a relatively poor family. The Son of God was born in a stable.</p> <p>2 Corinthians 8:9 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.</p> <p>While Christ’s entire humble life was part of his humiliation, his crucifixion and death was the culmination. For on the cross Christ endured the essence of hell: separation from God the Father.</p> <p>Matthew 27:46 [Jesus cried,] “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”</p> <p>It is important to note that throughout Christ’s humiliation, nothing happened to him that he didn’t allow to happen. When Judas came to betray Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemene, Jesus knocked seasoned soldiers over just with his word, but then submitted willingly to the arrest (cf. John 18:4-11). Even his death itself came on Chris’s timeframe.</p> <p>John 19:30 Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.</p> <p>Christ’s humiliation means he gave up his power, but it does not mean he was powerless!</p>

He descended into hell.

This is perhaps the most misunderstood phrase of the Second Article. It is often assumed that Christ went to hell to suffer for sins. That is inaccurate. As we saw in Matthew 27:46, Christ suffered hell on the cross. Christ's descent marks the beginning of his proclamation that he was victorious in his battle with Satan, sin, and death. It just so happens the demons were the first to hear this message.

1 Peter 3:18,19 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison.

Colossians 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

At this time Jesus began to announce his resurrection to his followers by making a series of appearances. Paul describes these appearances in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 15:5-8 He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also.

These numerous appearances illustrate that the doctrine of Christ's resurrection is crucial. Jesus wanted many witnesses so that there could be no doubt that he did indeed rise. For without the resurrection, God's plan of salvation is a sham.

1 Corinthians 15:17 If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

He ascended into heaven

Christ's ascension is a crucial event for our faith, as well. For the ascension shows that Christ's redemption work is truly complete. Otherwise, he wouldn't have left. Christ ascension assures us that the payment for our sins is final and complete. Heaven is ours!

John 14:2,3 [Jesus said,] "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.

Christ is ruling over all things for our good. He does this as prophet, priest, and king. (cf. Lesson 4 of "Faith Builders")

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

At this time — Judgement Day — no one will be able to deny that Jesus is Lord. As children of God, we long for this day to come, that we might go to our true home — heaven!

2 Peter 3:13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.