

Who is Jesus?

<https://www.lcms.org/about/beliefs/who-is-jesus>

This is the most important question we can ask:

Who is Jesus?

In a world in which information is readily available and opinions abound, this fundamental question stands above all other inquiries and considerations.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod believes Jesus is exactly who He said He is. Along with the ancient Church, we confess that Jesus is true God and true man in one person. He is the Son of God who was crucified and raised from the dead for the salvation of all who trust in Him.

Christ is not Jesus's last name, but identifies Him as the Messiah (Christ is the Greek translation of Messiah), the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises that God saves His people.

This fulfillment and salvation happened in history in real time and in a real place (first century AD in Israel) through a flesh-and-blood person named Jesus.

The Bible is the true and trustworthy Word of God that records God's love for the world through His Son Jesus. The miracles recorded in the Gospels and the teachings of Jesus are true and accurate.

Jesus physically died on a cross and physically rose from the dead in three days. He physically ascended into heaven, and the Church awaits His second coming when He will judge all people.

Those who trust in Jesus as their Savior will rise to eternal life in heaven. Those who deny Jesus and live in their sin will be cast out of His presence to hell.

Scripture

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:1–5, 14 (ESV)

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5–11 (ESV)

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1:13–20 (ESV)

Confessions

Our churches teach that the Word, that is, the Son of God (John 1:14), assumed the human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. So there are two natures — the divine and the human — inseparably joined in one person.

There is one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried. He did this to reconcile the Father to us and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of mankind (John 1:29).

He also descended into hell, and truly rose again on the third day. Afterward, He ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. There He forever reigns and has dominion over all creatures.

He sanctifies those who believe in Him, by sending the Holy Spirit into their hearts to rule, comfort, and make them alive. He defends them against the devil and from the power of sin.

The same Christ will openly come again to judge the living and the dead, and so forth, according to the Apostles Creed. (Augsburg Confession II)

Luther's Small Catechism

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 person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

Athanasian Creed

But it is also necessary for everlasting salvation that one faithfully believe the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is the right faith that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man.

He is God, begotten from the substance of the Father before all ages; And He is man, born from the substance of His mother in this age: Perfect God and perfect man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh; equal to the Father with respect to His divinity, less than the Father with respect to His humanity.

Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ: One, however, not by the conversion of the divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity into God; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ, Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, Ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

At His coming all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account concerning their own deeds.

A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles

We believe, teach and confess that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Lord, and that through faith in Him we receive forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation.

We confess that “our works cannot reconcile God or merit forgiveness of sins and grace, but that we obtain forgiveness and grace only by faith when we believe that we are received into favor for Christ’s sake, who alone has been ordained to be the mediator and propitiation through whom the Father is reconciled” (AC, XX, 9).

We believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven and that all who die without faith in Him are eternally damned.

We believe that those who believe in Christ will enjoy a blissful relationship with Him during the interim between their death and His second coming, and that on the last day their bodies will be raised.

We therefore **reject** the following:

1. That we may operate on the assumption that there may be other ways of salvation than through faith in Jesus Christ.
2. That some persons who lack faith in Christ may be considered “anonymous Christians.”
3. That there is no eternal hell for unbelievers and ungodly men.