# Knowing Jesus from the Creedal Standards

1. **Introduction**.
   a. ***As the church proclaimed Christ, it also articulated clearly who Jesus was. Why?***
      i. ***Outside the church***: The church needed to articulate and defend the truth.
      ii. ***Inside the church***: The church had to respond to false ways of thinking about Jesus.
      iii. ***What was at stake?*** The truth of who Jesus is and what he does. Life/death. Gospel.
   b. ***The first 500+ years of the Church was centered on articulating the Trinity/ Christ***.
   c. ***Councils*** (Nicaea, 325; Constantinople, 381; Ephesus, 431; Chalcedon, 451, plus more).
   d. ***Three Biblical Truths about Christ Needed to be Articulated and Kept Together***.
      i. Son is eternal Son, second person of Trinity, one subject of the incarnation (Jn 1:1,14)
      ii. The Son is truly/fully God (*homoousios*; *homo* = same; *ousios* = nature/being).
      iii. The Son is truly/fully human (=human nature = body + soul).

2. **The Trinity**. ***The First Doctrinal Formulation that was Necessary was the Trinity***.
   a. *Oneness*: God is the one, living, and true God (=singular and simple).
   b. *Threeness*: The Father is God; the Son is God; the Spirit is God, yet distinct.
   c. *Nature-person distinction*.
      i. *Ousia* (Greek); *essentia/substantia* (Latin); nature/being (English). ***What*** God is.
      ii. *Hypostasis* (Greek); *persona* (Latin); person (English). ***Who*** of the nature. Subject
   d. The divine persons subsist in and fully/totally share the same identical divine nature. Persons are not distinguished by their nature/attributes but by their personal relations.
   e. Within God there is a fully shared life, love, communication (John 1:1-2, 18; 17:5).
   f. In God's external actions, his actions are one/inseparable but also *appropriated*.
   g. Also, some of God's external actions *terminate* in one person. **Example**: incarnation.
   h. Trinitarian Formulation occurred at Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381). Why did Nicaea occur? Because of the Arian Controversy.
   i. **The Nicene Creed (381)**.
      i. We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.
      ii. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten (*monogenē*) Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance (*homoousion*) with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man; he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; from thence he shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.
      iii. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets.

iv. In one holy catholic and apostolic Church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## 3. Christological Formulation (relation of the two natures to the one person).

a. **False Paths/Heresies to Avoid**.
   i. *Apollinarianism* (381). Jesus is not truly human (no soul). Also, the will issue.
   ii. *Nestorianism* (431). Jesus is not God the Son incarnate, but more a man indwelt by the Son. Nestorius affirmed two persons in Christ along with two natures.
   iii. *Monophysitism* (451). Jesus is not truly God *and* truly man. He is a hybrid.

b. **The Chalcedonian Definition (451)**.
   i. We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in deity and the same perfect in manness, truly God and truly man, the same of a reasonable [rational] soul and body, consubstantial [*homoousios*] with the Father according to the deity and the same consubstantial with us according to the manness, like us according to all things except sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the deity, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, [born] of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God [*theotokos*, "God-bearer"], according to the manness, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, being made known in two natures [*en duo physesin*], without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the distinction of the natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one person [*eis hen prosōpon*] and one subsistence [*mian hypostasin*], not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, the only begotten, God, the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. As the prophets of old [declared] concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the [Nicene] Creed of the holy Fathers has been handed down to us.
   ii. ***Key Points***.
      1. *One and the same Son*: God the Son, second person of the Trinity.
         a. Begotten before all ages: Eternal generation. The Son in relation to the Father and the Holy Spirit.
         b. The doctrine of the Trinity. See the Nicene Creed. John 1:1, 14.
      2. *True God*. Perfect in deity, consubstantial (*homoousios*) with the Father.
         a. Son shares or subsists in the same identical divine nature as Father and Spirit.
         b. In the incarnation, no change to the divine nature (without confusion, change).
         c. The properties/attributes of each nature are preserved.
         d. Biblical: All the data referring to Christ's deity. Creator-creature distinction.
      3. *True man*. Human nature: body + [rational] soul.
         a. Everything we are except sin.
         b. Virgin conception. Identification with us in his humanity.
         c. Biblical data: All the data referring to Christ's humanity.
      4. *One person: hypostatic union in two natures*.
         a. Mary as God-bearer (*theotokos*). This was against Nestorianism.

b. Emphasizes what is later termed the "en-hypostatic" union.
c. Jesus was not a man indwelt by the Son who lived, suffered, and died. No, he is God the Son himself who lived, suffered, died, and was raised *as a man* in his humanity or human nature.

4. **Later Points**. **Councils**: Constantinople (553); Constantinople (681).
   a. ***Communicatio Idiomatum*** (=communication of properties/attributes). A test case in the relationship between the natures (John 8:58/Matt 11:27 with Matt 24:36; Acts 20:28).
   b. **The *Extra*** (=to act *outside* of Christ's human nature). Test case of how the person acts in both natures (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3).
   c. **Dyothelitism** (=two wills; *duo*= two; *thelema* = will). Test case of Christ's true humanity and the person-nature distinction (Matt 4:4; 26:39; Rom 5:19; Phil 2:6-11; Heb 5:10 – tied to Christ's obedience).

5. **Concluding Reflection: Why is this Important?**