

The Nativity of our Lord

THE APOSTLES' CREED – SECOND ARTICLE

Here we learn to know the Second Person of the Godhead. We see what we have from God over and above the temporal goods mentioned before. We see how He has completely poured forth Himself [Matthew 26:28] and withheld nothing from us [2 Corinthians 8:9]. Now, this article is very rich and broad. But in order to explain it briefly also and in a childlike way, we shall take up one phrase and sum up the entire article. As we have said, we may learn from this article how we have been redeemed. We shall base this on these words, “In Jesus Christ, our Lord.”

Now, if you are asked, “What do you believe in the Second Article about Jesus Christ?” answer briefly,

“I believe that Jesus Christ, God’s true Son, has become my Lord.”

“But what does it mean to become Lord?”

“It is this. He has redeemed me from sin, from the devil, from death, and from all evil. For before I did not have a Lord or King, but was captive under the devil’s power, condemned to death, stuck in sin and blindness” [see Ephesians 2:1–3].

For when we had been created by God the Father and had received from Him all kinds of good, the devil came and led us into disobedience, sin, death, and all evil [Genesis 3]. So we fell under God’s wrath and displeasure and were doomed to eternal damnation, just as we had merited and deserved. 29 There was no counsel, help, or comfort until this only and eternal Son of God—in His immeasurable goodness—had compassion upon our misery and wretchedness. He came from heaven to help us [John 1:9]. 30 So those tyrants and jailers are all expelled now. In their place has come Jesus Christ, Lord of life, righteousness, every blessing, and salvation. He has delivered us poor, lost people from hell’s jaws, has won us, has made us free [Romans 8:1–2], and has brought us again into the Father’s favor and

grace. He has taken us as His own property under His shelter and protection [Psalm 61:3–4] so that He may govern us by His righteousness, wisdom, power, life, and blessedness....

THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

But here our wise spirits twist themselves about with their great art and wisdom. They cry out and bawl, “How can bread and wine forgive sins or strengthen faith?” They hear and know that we do not say this about bread and wine. Because, in itself, bread is bread. But we speak about the bread and wine that is Christ’s body and blood and has the words attached to it. That, we say, is truly the treasure—and nothing else—through which such forgiveness is gained. Now the only way this treasure is passed along and made our very own is in the words “Given ... and shed for you.” For in the words you have both truths, that it is Christ’s body and blood, and that it is yours as a treasure and gift. Now Christ’s body can never be an unfruitful, empty thing that does or profits nothing. Yet, no matter how great the treasure is in itself, it must be included in the Word and administered to us. Otherwise we would never be able to know or seek it.

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