

## **WE BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST'S VIRGIN BIRTH, SINLESS LIFE, AND HIS MIRACLES.**

### **Introduction**

The Pastoral Search Committee is surveying the congregation to find out what *qualities* are important for a new pastor. In addition, the committee will examine the *qualifications* of the applicants according to the biblical standards for a pastor.

We've probably all heard stories of people who are unqualified being given authority and responsibilities they are unable to handle. Often times this happens because their applications or references weren't carefully screened.

Following are some actual statements found on applications:

1. 'I received a plague for Salesperson of the Year.'
2. 'Wholly responsible for two (2) failed financial institutions.'
3. 'Reason for leaving last job: maturity leave.'
4. 'Failed bar exam with relatively high grades.'
5. 'It's best for employers that I not work with people.'
6. 'Let's meet , so you can 'ooh' and 'aah' over my experience.'
7. 'You will want me to be Head Honcho in no time.'
8. 'Am a perfectionist and rarely if if ever forget details.'
9. 'I was working for my mom until she decided to move.'
10. 'I have an excellent track record, although I am not a horse.'
11. 'I am loyal to my employer at all costs....Please feel free to respond to my résumé on my office voice mail.'
12. 'My goal is to be a meteorologist. But since I possess no training in meteorology, I suppose I should try stock brokerage.'

Can you spot any potential pastors in these application statements!?

In my last message, we affirmed our belief in the deity of Jesus Christ—that He was God in the flesh. We believe that because of what the Bible says about Him. The

Bible is Christ's "reference," and it testifies to His "qualifications."

What are Jesus Christ's "qualifications" to be the Son of God?

For one thing, the Bible says that Jesus was born of a virgin. And so . .

**WE BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST'S VIRGIN BIRTH** (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:34-35; Isaiah 7:14).

***Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*** (Isaiah 7:14 NIV)

***This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.*** (Matthew 1:18 NIV)

***"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.*** (Luke 1:34-35 NIV)

Mary, an "ordinary" woman, miraculously conceived a child by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God impregnated a human being producing Jesus, the Son of God.

As Matthew wrote, ***All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us."*** (Matthew 1:22-23 NIV)

The Spirit of God uniting with a human being and producing a God-man—pretty impressive credentials!

There's lot's of mythology that says the gods united with humans and produced demigods. But though these may be considered "super humans," they are less than God. And in any case, they are mere myths with no evidence for their actual existence.

Whereas Jesus Christ was an actual, historical figure, attested to, not only by the Bible, but by secular sources. For example, . . .

Cornelius Tacitus (55-117 A.D.) is regarded as the greatest historian of ancient Rome. Writing on the reign of Nero, Tacitus alludes to the death of Christ and to the existence of Christians in Rome.

Mara Bar-Serapion was a Syrian who lived in the first century A.D. He wrote a letter to his son Serapion that mentions the Jews who killed their King. This letter is now in the possession of the British Museum.

Suetonius (69-140 A.D.) was a Roman historian and annalist of the Imperial House under the Emperor Hadrian. He refers to Christ and Christians and the “disturbances” caused by them, namely not worshipping idols and loving all, including their tormentors.

Lucian (120-180 A.D.), a Greek satirist, although he spoke scornfully of Christ and Christians, affirmed that they were a real and historical people.

Why is it important that Jesus was born of a virgin?

The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is important because it verifies Scripture—His birth was foretold and fulfilled exactly as it was predicted.

Christ’s virgin birth speaks of God’s love for us in that He left His place in glory to come and dwell with us, and so He might reveal the Father to us.

The virgin birth is important because Jesus was not born in sin; that is, He had no sin nature ([Hebrews 7:26](#)). It would seem that the sin nature is passed down from generation to generation through the father ([Romans 5:12, 17, 19](#)). Although Eve was the one deceived and who initially took the forbidden fruit, Paul explains that ***sin entered the world through one MAN*** (Rom. 5:12). The Virgin Birth circumvented the transmission of the sin nature through a man, and allowed the eternal God to become a perfect man.

Which leads to the next statement of our beliefs:

**WE BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST'S SINLESS LIFE** (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15, 7:26–27; 1 John 3:5; 1 Peter 2:22).

***God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*** (2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV)

***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 NIV)

***Such a high priest meets our need--one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.*** (Hebrews 7:26-27 NIV)

***But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.*** (1 John 3:5 NIV)

***"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."*** (1 Peter 2:22; Isa. 53:9)

What does it mean to be sinless?

A definition of "sin" that I believe is helpful is: *sin is disbelief in and disobedience to God.* We can see these two elements in the first sin. God told Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because if they did they would surely die.

Satan told them they would not die but that they would become like God knowing good and evil.

Who did they believe and obey? Satan. They disbelieved and disobeyed God, and sin entered the human experience.

This definition of "sin" is helpful because it is the biblical definition, and not mankind's, which tends to be subjective and fluid, changing with time, culture and even with each individual.

And the Bible states that through the disobedience of the one man—Adam—the many (mankind) were made sinners (Rom. 5:19). It also says that the wages of sins is death, and since all die, all have sinned.

But of Jesus it says He had no sin. In other words, He never disbelieved or disobeyed the Father.

Now, did he *not* sin because He *could not* sin—because He was God?

No. The Bible also says He was ***tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.*** (Hebrews 4:15 NIV) If Jesus *could not* sin, He *could not* have been tempted. But He *was* tempted. And He committed *no* sin. In other words, He lived in perfect faith and obedience to the Father.

So Jesus came not only to show us what the Father looks like, but to show us what we are look like as *sons of God*.

But if death is the result of sin, and Jesus never sinned, how do we explain Jesus' death?

Why is it important/necessary that Jesus was sinless?

At Easter time, when we celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection, I like to ask the question: who killed Jesus? Was it the Romans who executed Him by nailing Him to the cross? Or was it the Jews who demanded His death?

The answer is: neither! No one killed Jesus! Jesus said, ***I lay down my life . . . No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.***" (John 10:18 NIV)

And why did Jesus *lay down His life*? He said, ***"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*** (John 10:11 NIV)

And Paul added: ***God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*** (2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV)

In other words, on the cross, Jesus exchanged His righteousness for our sinfulness. That's why the Father turned away from Him. And then Jesus gave up His Spirit. He died for us, paying the penalty for our sins. He was the perfect sacrifice.

Just before Jesus said, ***I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd***

***lays down his life for the sheep, He said, I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*** (John 10:10-11 NIV)

As we've said, Jesus came to show us what we're to look like; He came to show us what this full or abundant life looks like. We can see it in His faith in and obedience to the Father.

But we can also see it in the power and authority He had. And this power and authority was seen especially in His miracles.

And the Bible tells of the miracles Jesus performed, and . . .

**WE BELIEVE IN CHRIST'S MIRACLES** (Matthew 4:23; Luke 6:17-19; John 3:2).

***Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.*** (Matthew 4:23 NIV)

***He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.*** (Luke 6:17-19 NIV)

***He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."*** (John 3:2 NIV)

What is a miracle?

Strictly speaking, a miracle is something beyond our explanation or understanding.

And Jesus certainly did things beyond our explanation or understanding!

- He turned ordinary water into extraordinary wine,
- He walked on water,
- He calmed the wind and the waves with a word,
- He cast out demons,
- He healed the sick,

- He raised the dead

What is especially important about Jesus' miracles?

But as important as the miracles are, we need to see what they represent. The miracles Jesus performed represented in part, His power and authority over the physical and spiritual realm.

And in Jesus' power and authority over the physical realm, we can see the power and authority God gave mankind in the beginning:

***God blessed [mankind] and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and SUBDUE it. RULE OVER the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*** (Genesis 1:28 NIV)

The word *subdue* means *to bring into subjection*, or to bring under control. *To rule over or have dominion* (K.J.V.) further defines the scope of man's power and authority. Mankind was given power and authority over the earth and all its inhabitants—the entire physical realm.

But he lost that power and authority when he disbelieved and disobeyed God. In fact, he relinquished his power and authority to Satan when he believed and obeyed him!

But because Jesus lived in perfect faith and obedience to the Father, He retained that power and authority. And so we see in Jesus' miracles what the abundant life looks like with the power and authority to subdue the earth and rule over its inhabitants.

In Jesus' miracles, God redeems the moment, giving us a glimpse of what this world will look like when God restores it and mankind to their glory before sin corrupted them.

## **Conclusion**

This world is under the bondage of corruption and decay. In spite of what the evolutionists say, we are on the road to destruction. This world is doomed. We need a Rescuer; we need a Savior!

And we desperately look for a rescuer and a savior. We look for it in a government. We look for it in technological and scientific progress. We look for it in a person. We look for it in ourselves. But no one and nothing qualifies! All are in the same boat—and it's leaking and sinking fast!

No one is “qualified” to be the Savior of the world—except One. The Christian faith and hope rests entirely on Jesus Christ—who He is and what He’s done. As the Bible says, ***Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*** (Acts 4:12 NIV) And that name is *Jesus Christ!*

Jesus Christ is qualified to be the Savior of the world because of who He is—verified by His virgin birth, and because of what He’s done, demonstrated in His sinless life and His miracles.

This is what we believe!