

## Hope Community Church

### Week 4 - Statement of Faith: Jesus Christ

#### Learning Objectives

- To better understand what we as Hope Community Church believe about Jesus Christ.
- To use this greater understanding to better define our role here on Earth as Christ-followers.

#### From Hope's Statement of Faith:

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1, 20:28; Rom. 9:5; 8:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30,31; Matt. 20:28; Eph. 1:4; Acts 1:11; Rom. 5:6-8; 6:9,10; Heb. 7:25; 9:28; 1 Tim. 3:16

? Where in society do we see "Christ-like" stories? Think film, literature, television, sports, etc. What sort of commonalities do these stories share?

#### The Virgin Birth

##### Matthew 1:18-25 (NIV)

<sup>18</sup>This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. " <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup>"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). <sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. <sup>25</sup>But he did not consume their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

? What are some of the many names of Jesus? What is significant about these names?

*Possible answers: God, Lord, Word, Messiah, Emmanuel, Christ, Savior, Redeemer, Mediator, Bread of Life. His many names are a reminder of all encompassing nature and the great extent of his character.*

There are several definitions of Yeshua that can be found in Hebrew and Aramaic biblical text, taken from the Hebrew verb, yasha, that means "to deliver, save, or rescue," and also stated as "Yehoshua." Biblestudytools.com

? Why is it significant that Jesus would come into this world under such scandal? What can we make of Joseph's response to the situation surrounding the birth of Jesus?

*Possible answers: Even Jesus' initial existence caused the general public outrage. Jesus did not come into the world to bring peace to earth, but a sword (Matthew 10:34). Joseph's initial response was the "right one" according to Jewish law. But the extraordinary nature of the situation meant Joseph got a glimpse into the new law Jesus was bringing to us.*

## Substitutionary Atonement

### 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)

<sup>21</sup>God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

? What is sin? What are some examples of sin?

*Possible answers: An act of offense against God. Cheating, lying, killing, Not caring for the least of these, gluttony, etc.*

? Why is it important that Jesus never sinned?

*Possible answers: Jesus sinless life allowed him to be a perfect sacrifice for all sin.*

This betrothal was a sacred arrangement in the first century, more serious than we view engagement today. Couples were even referred to as husband and wife. There was not to be sexual intercourse during this betrothal period. It would take a writ of divorcement to sever the betrothal, but, nonetheless, there was to be no sexual cohabitation. Matthew explains how Mary was found to be pregnant. Joseph, being a righteous man and a man of honor, did not want to embarrass her publicly. He decided to dismiss her quietly. Biblestudytools.com

? What did we gain in exchange from Jesus' sinless nature?

*Possible answers: The righteousness of God, salvation, eternal life, freedom from the penalty of our sin*

**Read out loud:** Atonement can be defined most simply as a covering for sin.

**Leviticus 5:18:** They are to bring to the priest as a guilt offering a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. In this way the priest will make atonement for them for the wrong they have committed unintentionally, and they will be forgiven.

Jesus' atonement was final and perfect, as opposed to the former system of constant sacrifice.

## Miracles and Teaching

? Let's brainstorm some of the signs and miracles that we read about Jesus doing in the Bible.

### **John 20:30-31 (NIV)**

<sup>30</sup>Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup>But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

**?** Why did Jesus perform “many other signs”?

*Possible answers: The signs and wonders Jesus performed pointed towards his divine nature, as he was holding the form of both God and man. People still found reasons to deny this truth however.*

**?** What does verse 31 mean by “and that by believing you may have life in his name”?

*Possible answers: We are made alive in Christ when we make a decision to follow Jesus. (Ephesians 2, Romans 5)*

### **Resurrection & Bodily Appearance**

#### **1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NIV)**

<sup>3</sup>For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup>and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. <sup>6</sup>After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup>Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, <sup>8</sup>and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

#### **1 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)**

<sup>16</sup>Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great: He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

**?** Why does Paul make it explicitly clear that Jesus both rose from the dead and was seen in the flesh by many individuals?

*Possible answers: Paul wants to make it clear/tangible the miracle that has occurred. Life to death.*

**?** Thinking back to our early discussions of Christ archetypes, how does Paul’s characterization differ from the ones we listed at the beginning of this study?

*Possible answers: Paul’s characterization is all encompassing - Jesus is the model for the archetypes we listed previously.*

**Philippians 2:6-11 (NIV)**

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

? What are some examples from scripture of individuals using their status either for their own personal advantage or humbly accepting lowly positions?

*Possible answers: Lydia used her social position to lead and lead well, Joseph used his position to feed and care for all of Egypt, Herod used his position to assert dominance over the Israelites, Pharaoh enslaved the Israelites*

? What is the significance of Jesus being exalted to the “highest place” (verse 9)?

*Possible answers: Jesus is Lord and therefore exalted to the highest place by his father.*

**Accountability Questions**

? What aspects of Jesus’ character do you find difficult to wrap your head around?

? Which aspects of Jesus’ character are most encouraging or life giving to you in this season?

? How can you be more like Christ in your character this week? How can we help you in this?