

# DID IT REALLY HAPPEN?

A CHRISTMAS INVESTIGATION

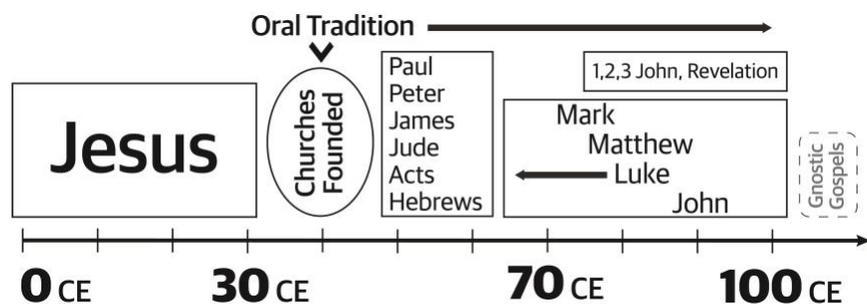
## Week 1: *Did Jesus Exist?*

Week 2: *The Virgin Birth & Other Miracles*

Week 3: *The Strongest Evidence (Part 1)*

Week 4: *The Strongest Evidence (Part 2)*

### APPETIZER: Examining the Footprint of Jesus



### DINE IN: Opening the Ancient Scrolls

1 John 1; Galatians 1:11-2:5; 4:4;  
Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

**Galatians 1:11-2:5**

1. Notice Paul persecuted “the church” before his conversion in 33-34 AD. Gatherings of committed Christ-followers existed from the beginning based on some existing good news message about Jesus. They weren’t waiting for a “New Testament” record to be written. The “oral tradition” was active from the start.
2. Also notice everything that happened before a single “New Testament” document existed. By the time the authors of the New Testament were writing, they could not have made stuff up. If the stories in the gospels about Jesus were made up, the churches would have rejected the writings, saying “Hey, that’s not Jesus!”

Q: Did Jesus exist?

A: Yes. He left us a first-century footprint. Someone existed who taught a radically irreligious message and began a spiritually subversive first-century movement. That person has always been known as Jesus.

### TAKE OUT: What if it’s all true?

*Life is “better”...*

1. Jesus shows us a better way to be human. (**Matthew 5-7**; etc)
2. Jesus shows us a better way to see God. (**John 16:7-9**)
3. Jesus give us “a better hope” (**Hebrews 7:19**)
4. Jesus gives us “a better covenant” (**Hebrews 7:22; 8:6**), because it is based on “better promises” (**Hebrews 8:6**).
5. This “better” way makes the old way “obsolete” (**Hebrews 8:13**).

*If you’re not (yet) a Christian...*

Consider reading this book, Galatians, or the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), or the Gospel of John, and ask God to meet with you there.

*If you are a Christian...*

It’s time to do a personal spiritual inventory. Are you really living like it’s all true? If it’s true, everything about you – your ethical choices, your financial decisions, your relational interactions – they all matter in new ways! Don’t just embrace half the gospel (the end of religious rules) and not the full message (the opportunity to live a life of love in Christ). Let God’s grace fill you with gratitude, and live accordingly.

*NEXT WEEK: The Virgin Birth & Other Miracles*

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## Home Church Questions

### HANGOUT [Warming Up to the Topic – in one Large Group]

1. What do you most/least look forward to during the Christmas season?
2. Review Sunday's teaching. What stood out to you? What questions remain?

### HEAR [Listening to God through Scripture – in Discussion Groups]

3. Read our text – **Galatians 1:11-2:5**.
  - a. What verse or idea stands out to you?
  - b. Sometimes people say that the “oral tradition” (passing on stories and information about Jesus by word of mouth) was too open to corruption, like a game of broken telephone. So, by the time the stories were written down, they could have been mostly fabricated. How might you respond to this, especially with things this passage mentions in mind and the dating of this document?
  - c. Recall **1:23**. Have you heard of other interesting and extreme conversion stories? If so, share them briefly. How about YOUR story? Was your conversion sudden or more of a slow burn? Practice relaying your own conversion story in a few short sentences that would make sense to someone unfamiliar to Christianity.
  - d. Debating circumcision isn't a big deal in the Church today. Are there other issues today that attract the conservative Bible legalism of “false believers” that we should be alert to?
  - e. How would you respond to someone who went to the other extreme and claimed, “We're saved by grace, so it doesn't matter how you live”? (Probably an attitude that **2:17** is lamenting.)
  - f. Role Play! Next time you hear someone say “Jesus never existed” how might you respond?

### HUDDLE [Making It Personal and Praying Together – in Huddles]

4. Choose a question or two from your huddle questions handouts before praying for each other.