

DID IT REALLY HAPPEN?

A CHRISTMAS INVESTIGATION

Week 1: *Did Jesus Exist?*

Week 2: *What about the Miracles?*

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

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

APPETIZER: ~~Did Jesus Exist?~~ Was Jesus sent by God?

Last week the question was... Did Jesus exist?

Yes! He had to exist because his teachings exist by early in the first century, allowing time for communities to form around his message (ACTS), letters to be written to these communities about how to live his message (EPISTLES), and records of his life and teachings (GOSPELS), all completed within the first century. The existence of Jesus' teachings is like finding his DNA on the crime scene – Jesus is proven far beyond a reasonable doubt as “guilty” of existing.

Now the question is... Do we have any evidence that this amazing, revolutionary, spiritually irreligious teacher was actually sent by God?

REASONS FOR SKEPTICISM...

1. *Anti-supernatural bias.*

- ANGELS?
Why does an omnipresent God need angels to carry his messages?
- THE STAR?
Four explanations ...
 - 1) A pious fable
 - 2) An astronomical event
 - 3) An astrological event
 - 4) A supernatural event
- A VIRGIN BIRTH?

2. *Supposed similarities between the Jesus story and religious myths.*
E.g., Mithra; Attis; Dionysus (Bacchus); Krishna; Buddha
3. *Discrepancies between Matthew and Luke and other Bible writers.*

DINE IN: “But When The Time Had Fully Come”

Galatians 4:1-7

Philippians 2:5-11; John 1:1, 14; 8:58

He comes down; down from the heights of absolute being into time and space, down into humanity; further still, if embryologists are right, to recapitulate in the womb ancient and pre-human phases of life; down to the very roots and seabed of Nature He has created.

~ C.S. Lewis, Miracles

TAKE OUT: “Born to give them second birth”

I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you... And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees.
~ The Prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 36:25-27)

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.
~ The Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Today, you can experience the greatest miracle.

NEXT WEEK: The Strongest Evidence (Part 1)

Home Church Questions

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

1. Review Sunday's teaching. What stood out to you? What questions remain?

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

2. Read our text – **Galatians 4:1-7**.
 - a. What verse or idea stands out to you?
 - b. Using the ideas of this passage, in your own words, how might you respond to someone who asks these two questions:
 - i. "Why did God wait so long to send Jesus?"
 - ii. "In what ways are the Old Covenant and New Covenant different?"
3. Let's exegete a Christmas Carol! Look up the lyrics for "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing". Discuss the theological truths in each verse and look up Scripture passages that relate to each theme to help enrich your conversation. (When group discussion time is over, you might want to come together and sing this amazing hymn!)

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.