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There is a story that 2000 years ago, a baby was born in a feeding trough, in a barn in a little town called Bethlehem.

The world has changed over the last 20 centuries, and the story of the baby has been overshadowed by atheism, A general loss of awareness of history, and more recently commercialism...

BUT WHAT IF THE ORIGINAL STORY
IS TRUE?

The first part of this short booklet covers where the story of Jesus and Christmas comes from.

The second part is a copy and paste of the story itself directly from the Bible, however with all parts of the history placed in chronological order.

How do we measure all dates?

8th October 1769 - Captain James Cook landed in New Zealand at Kaiti Beach in Poverty Bay.

6th February 1840 – Treaty of Waitangi signed.

25th April 1915 – ANZAC troops land in Gallipoli.

29th May 1953 - Sir Edmund Hillary, with Tenzing Norgay, climbed to the summit of Mount Everest.

These are just four out of thousands of well-known dates. All dates share **FOUR** things...

- 1) They all have a day number (In the case of Christmas day that would be “25”
- 2) They all have a month – somewhere between January and December.
- 3) They all end with a year, sometimes that year is designated as B.C (or B.C.E) or A.D (C.E.)
- 4) **IN EVERY CASE** that year number is measured from the same origin – the birth of a baby in Bethlehem.

- 5) As Rick Warren says, *“Every other event in history and every event on your calendar today is dated by how many days and years it has been since Jesus Christ appeared on Earth”* .(Warren 2008, 4).

Simple logic suggests that the person around whose life our entire dating system came from must have been very significant to our history, and maybe even to who we are.

What if the Christmas story is true?



So what if the whole Christmas story is actually true?
Let's think about that, because it really is a story—one
that's been told and retold for centuries.

Who recorded the Historical accounts we have?

Most of what people know about how Jesus got started
in life comes from two Bible writers named Matthew

and Luke. Sure, the Old Testament (that's the part before Jesus) has some predictions, but when it comes to the actual events, Matthew and Luke are the main sources.

Now, don't get thrown off by the word "*story*." Lots of people today hear "*story*" and automatically think "*fairy tale*" or "*fiction*." But that's not fair. If I told you about my childhood in Africa or growing up on a farm, those would be stories too—but they'd be stories that really happened. In fact, most stories throughout history are true; that's how we pass on what's happened to us.

Author, Joel Settecase says in a blog post: *"If you read Matthew and Luke with an open mind, you'll see they meant to tell the real story of Jesus. In fact, it makes sense to say both of them were writing real history, when plenty of people who saw it happen were still around to check the facts."*

The way Luke's book starts is interesting. Usually, people just skip his intro to get to the main action. But the first four verses are actually really important for understanding what follows—not just in Luke, but also in Acts (another book of the Bible written by Luke), which he wrote later, and even some of Paul's letters that link back to Acts. Paul was another man who wrote quite a few parts of the New Testament. Luke was a doctor, a smart, well-educated man who was actually Greek. Despite not being Jewish in culture, he knew the

Jewish laws and culture inside out. When he wrote his books, he said, “A lot of people have tried to write about what happened around here. They talked to people who saw it themselves. I’ve checked into everything from the start, and I wanted to give you the true version, straight up and in the right order, so you’ll know that what you learned is authentic.” (Luke 1:1-4 Paraphrased)

Accounts that can be trusted.

It’s easy for people today to read these stories in another language, from the other side of the planet, 2,000 years later, and shrug it off as just another fairy tale—something similar to Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny. But back in those days, people reading it knew these things had actually happened. They could point to a neighbour, a cousin, or a friend who saw it all happen. And later, the Apostle Paul said that 500 people had seen Jesus alive again after he was killed—and lots of them were still around to tell you the story themselves. In other words, “If you don’t believe me, go talk to the eyewitnesses!” Back then, these things could be double-checked and verified.

So, this is what we can definitely confirm — not only do we measure historical dates by this event that happened in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago (that’s why it’s 2025 now, by the way), but Matthew and Luke’s stories were written while the people who actually saw Jesus were still breathing and could call them out if it wasn’t true.

But is there proof of Jesus outside the Bible? Actually, yes. A Roman historian named Tacitus, who lived not long after Jesus, wrote about “Christus” (that’s Latin for Christ), saying he was executed by Pontius Pilate when Tiberius was the emperor. Tacitus didn’t like Christians at all, but his historical writing confirms that the group started in Judea, that their founder was executed, and that the movement came to Rome.

Josephus, a Jewish historian from the same time, wrote: “About this time there was Jesus, a wise man, if you can call him just a man. He did amazing things and taught people who liked the truth. Lots of Jews and non-Jews followed him. He was the ‘Christ.’ When the top leaders turned on him, Pilate put him on a cross. But his followers stuck around, and they believed he came back to life after three days, just like the old prophets had said.”

Is this absolute proof, once and for all, that everything happened exactly as told? I think it is, but maybe you’re not convinced yet. However, if you stop and think about that first “silent night” in Bethlehem, “Peace on Earth and goodwill to all men”. What it would mean for everyone if it really did happen as the Bible tells us. If so, then maybe it’s worth more than just a holiday to eat, shop, and move on with life like nothing genuine and significant ever happened.

Another challenge to the Christmas story is that people sometimes say Matthew and Luke contradict each other, so maybe neither can be trusted. The truth is, they focus on different parts: Matthew was writing for Jewish people, Luke for everyone else. If you put what they wrote together in order, you get one big, connected story. Even in a courtroom, witnesses rarely agree on every detail—they just see things from where they're standing. That doesn't mean they're making stuff up, just that everyone notices different bits.

So maybe, just maybe, the Christmas story is more than just a story. It's a real event that changed the world. Let's follow it from the Bible but put all the events in a sequential order.

The Chronological Christmas Story

Matthew 1:18-25 NCV

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was engaged to marry Joseph, but before they married, she learned she was pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Mary's husband, Joseph, was a good man, he did not want to disgrace her in public, so he planned to divorce her secretly.

²⁰ While Joseph thought about these things, an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, descendant of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the baby in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²² All this happened to bring about what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ "The virgin will be pregnant. She will have a son, and they will name him Immanuel," which means "God is with us."

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the Lord's angel had told him to do. Joseph took Mary as his wife, ²⁵ but he did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to the son. And Joseph named him Jesus.

Luke 2:1-20 NCV

At that time, Augustus Caesar sent an order that all people in the countries under Roman rule must list their names in a register. ² This was the first registration; it was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to their own towns to be registered.

⁴ So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee, and went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, known as the town of David. Joseph went there because he was from the family of David. ⁵ Joseph registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was now pregnant.



While they were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to have the baby, ⁷ and she gave birth to her first son. Because there were no rooms left in the inn, she wrapped the baby with pieces of cloth and laid him in a feeding trough.

Shepherds Hear About Jesus

⁸ That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and they became very frightened. ¹⁰ The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I am bringing you good news that will be a great joy to all the people. ¹¹ Today your Savior was born in the town of David. He is Christ, the Lord. ¹² This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in pieces of cloth and lying in a feeding box.”

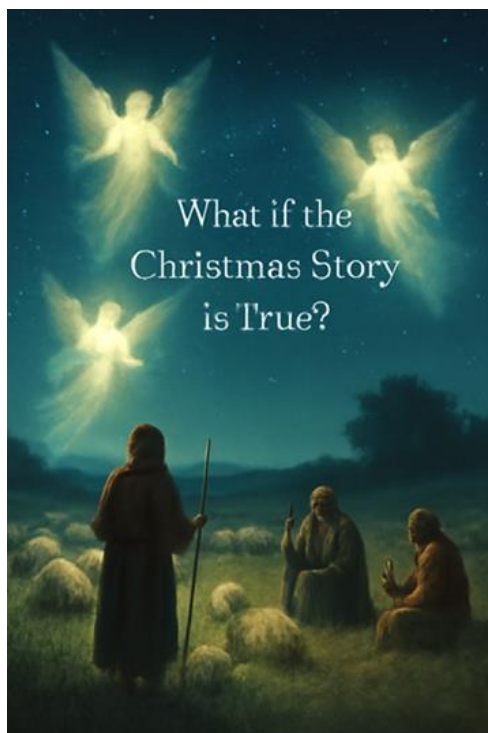
¹³ Then a very large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel, praising God and saying:

¹⁴ “Give glory to God in heaven,
and on earth let there be peace among the people
who please God.”

¹⁵ When the angels left them and went back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to

Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened which the Lord has told us about."

¹⁶ So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph and the baby, who was lying in a feeding trough. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they told what the angels had said about this child. ¹⁸ Everyone was amazed at what the shepherds said to them.



¹⁹ But Mary treasured these things and continued to think about them. ²⁰ Then the shepherds went back to

their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything they had seen and heard. It had been just as the angel had told them.

Matthew 1:25; Luke 2:21 NCV

²¹ When the baby was eight days old, he was circumcised and was named Jesus, the name given by the angel before the baby began to grow inside Mary.

Luke 2:22-39 NCV

²² When the time came for Mary and Joseph to do what the law of Moses taught about being made pure, they took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. ²³ (It is written in the law of the Lord: “Every firstborn male shall be given to the Lord.”)¹ ²⁴ Mary and Joseph also went to offer a sacrifice, as the law of the Lord says: “You must sacrifice two doves or two young pigeons.”

⁵ In Jerusalem lived a man named Simeon who was a good man and godly. He was waiting for the time when God would take away Israel’s sorrow, and the Holy Spirit was in him. ²⁶ Simeon had been told by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he saw the Christ promised by the Lord. ²⁷ The Spirit led Simeon to the Temple. When Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the Temple to do what the law said they must do, ²⁸ Simeon took the baby in his arms and thanked God:²⁹ “Now, Lord, you can let me, your servant, die in peace as you said.

³⁰ With my own eyes I have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you prepared before all people.

³² It is a light for the non-Jewish people to see
and an honour for your people, the Israelites.”

³³ Jesus’ father and mother were amazed at what Simeon had said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, “God has chosen this child to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel. He will be a sign from God that many people will not accept ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many will be made known. And the things that will happen will make your heart sad, too.”

³⁶ There was a prophetess, Anna, from the family of Phanuel in the tribe of Asher. Anna was very old. She had once been married for seven years. ³⁷ Then her husband died, and she was a widow for eighty-four years. Anna never left the Temple but worshiped God, going without food and praying day and night. ³⁸ Standing there at that time, she thanked God and spoke about Jesus to all who were waiting for God to free Jerusalem.

³⁹ When Joseph and Mary had done everything the law of the Lord commanded, they went home to Nazareth, their own town in Galilee.

BETWEEN SIX MONTHS AND TWO YEARS PASS BEFORE WE GET TO MATTHEW 2:1-23.

In that time, it seems Joseph and Mary have moved from Nazareth back to Bethlehem for some reason. Kyle Cavison Bair suggests that maybe the scandal of Jesus birth was still too raw in Nazareth (The quest for Christmas page 20). This is possible but the truth is we don't know. However, we do know that they had returned to Bethlehem when the wise men of the east followed a star and caught up with them in Bethlehem. We also know that Jesus must have been about two years old, because Herod *"learned from them the exact time they first saw the star"*, did some maths, and ordered all boys under the age of two to be killed.

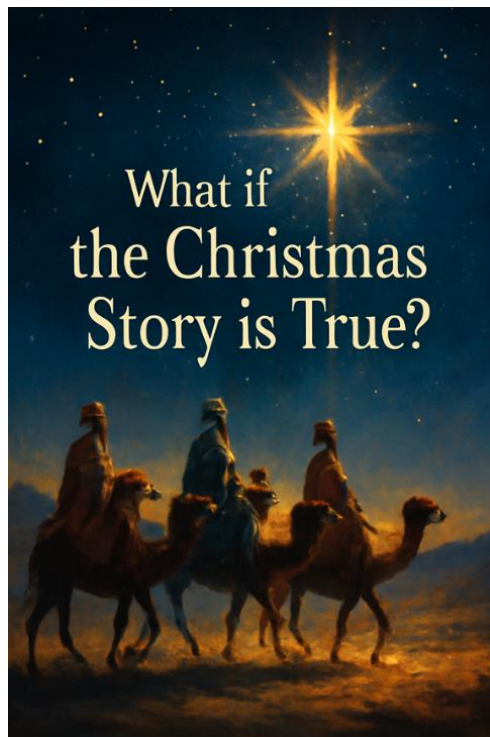
Matthew 2:1-23 NCV

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. When Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. ² They asked, "Where is the baby who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

³ When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, as were all the people in Jerusalem. ⁴ Herod called a meeting of all the leading priests and teachers of the law and asked them where the Christ would be born. ⁵ They answered, "In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet wrote about this in the Scriptures:

⁶ ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are not just an insignificant village in Judah.
A ruler will come from you
who will be like a shepherd for my people
Israel.’” Micah 5:2

⁷ Then Herod had a secret meeting with the wise men
and learned from them the exact time they first saw the
star. ⁸ He sent the wise men to Bethlehem, saying, “Look
carefully for the child. When you find him, come tell me
so I can worship him too.”



⁹ After the wise men heard the king, they left. The star that they had seen in the east went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹ They came to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. They opened their gifts and gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² But God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod, so they returned to their own country by a different way.

¹³ After they left, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, because Herod is starting to look for the child so he can kill him. Stay in Egypt until I tell you to return."

¹⁴ So Joseph got up and left for Egypt during the night with the child and his mother. ¹⁵ And Joseph stayed in Egypt until Herod died. This happened to bring about what the Lord had said through the prophet: "I called my son out of Egypt."

¹⁶ When Herod saw that the wise men had tricked him, he was furious. So he gave an order to kill all the baby boys in Bethlehem and in the surrounding area who were two years old or younger. This was in keeping with the time he learned from the wise men. ¹⁷ So what God had said through the prophet Jeremiah came true:

¹⁸ “A voice was heard in Ramah
of painful crying and deep sadness:
Rachel crying for her children.
She refused to be comforted,
because her children are dead.” Jeremiah 31:15

¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph in a dream while he was in Egypt. ²⁰ The angel said, “Get up! Take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, because the people who were trying to kill the child are now dead.”

²¹ So Joseph took the child and his mother and went to Israel. ²² But he heard that Archelaus was now king in Judea since his father Herod had died. So Joseph was afraid to go there. After being warned in a dream, he went to the area of Galilee, ²³ to a town called Nazareth, and lived there. And so what God had said through the prophets came true: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

So, there we have it. Taken directly from scripture and laid out in order. There are no contradictions, just different perspectives from different viewpoints, but very easily woven together.

Throughout this little booklet, I have continually challenged us with the question **“What if this story IS true”**. I have obviously done that deliberately, because this narrative is too important to ignore. I would like to leave you with a quote from the great C.S. Lewis –

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

Please, this Christmas somewhere or sometime

Amidst the lounge floor strewn with wrapping
paper,
Between the children waking up and the first
squeals of Christmas morning joy,
Between when the last plate is cleared away
and the time Grandpa falls asleep in his rocker,
Or maybe in the sad memories of times gone by
and friends and family missing...

SOMEWHERE – SOMETIME – CONSIDER...
WHAT IF THIS STORY IS TRUE?

**If you come to the conclusion it is worth
thinking about, maybe consider speaking to the
author in prayer. “Lord Jesus, thankyou for
coming into the world to save us – I BELIEVE”**