

The Beginning

The story before the story.

Luke 1:5-25

God's story always starts with obedience.

Real faith trusts God, not the circumstances.

The author behind the story.

Luke 1:1-4

The reason for the story.

"To know with certainty what I have been taught."

Book	Date Written	Earliest Copies	Time Gap	No. of Copies
<i>Iliad, Homer</i>	800 B.C.	400 B.C.	400 yrs	643
<i>Plato</i>	400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	7
<i>Gallic Wars, Caesar</i>	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1000 yrs	10
<i>History of Rome, Livy</i>	59 B.C. - 17 A.D.	4 th Century 10 th Century	400 yrs 1000 yrs	1 partial 19
New Testament	50-100 A.D.	130 A.D.	50 yrs	Fragments
		200 A.D.	100 yrs	Books
		250 A.D.	150 yrs	N.T.
		325 A.D.	225 yrs	5,600
		400-500 A.D.	400 yrs	24,600

The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict, McDowell

The response to the story.

What do I do with this Jesus?

NEXT STEPS

Use these study questions to turn a message into a conversation.

Food for thought

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching on *Starting Line: The Beginning*, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. If you were to ask five of your friends who don't go to church who Jesus is, how do you think they would answer and what would they base their answers on?

2. How has your understanding of who Jesus is changed over your life?

What have been the biggest influences in shaping your understanding of Jesus?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Doubt is something that plagues all of us at one time or another. This Sunday, we saw Zechariah express his doubt even after the angel Gabriel appeared to him with the news that he would have a son (Luke 1:18). Below are several incidences in which people in the Bible showed their doubt. What do you learn about doubt or Jesus' response to it from these stories?

John 20:24-29

Mark 9:17-24

Luke 7:18-23

Have you ever felt like doubt has been a hindrance to your faith?

Do you think doubt can ever help you grow spiritually? If so, how?

2. Everyone who hears about Jesus has to make a decision about who they think He is. The Apostle Paul came to the conclusion that Jesus is who He claimed to be, and he was killed because of it. In the Book of Colossians, he writes a very clear description of Jesus. As you read Colossians 1:15-20, what key points do you see Paul making?

What do you find most encouraging or helpful in this passage?

TAKING IT HOME

Are there any doubts that are tripping you up or hindering your faith?

This Sunday, Jeff read ***One Solitary Life***, a short description of the impact Jesus has had on our world. Here's that description for your encouragement.

One Solitary Life

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years, He was an itinerant preacher.

He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself.

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth – His coat. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today He is a centerpiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built, all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.