

**THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW: EXAM QUESTIONS AND  
ANSWERS**

**BY**

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**COURSE: GOSPEL OF MATTHEW  
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### **(1a) Compare and Contrast the Infancy Narrative in Matthew and Luke**

An infancy narrative is a kind of story that we find in Scripture, both in the Old Testaments and the New Testaments, as well as in the culture in which our biblical ancestors lived, but not in our culture.<sup>1</sup> The infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke have a historical core. As we look at Matthew's and Luke's stories we see that they both have points of convergence and divergence.

#### **Similarities**

The points of agreement between Matthew and Luke include some of the principal characters: the Davidic descent and conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit, the angelic annunciation, Jesus' birthplace at Bethlehem and residence in Nazareth, Jesus was born in the last days of Herod's reign (Matt. 2:1-13; Lk. 1:5), His mother was a virgin (Matt. 1:18; Lk. 1:27,34), She was betrothed to Joseph (Matt. 1:18; Lk. 1:27), He was declared to be a Saviour (Matt. 1:27; Lk. 2:11), Joseph knew beforehand both the fact and cause of Mary's condition (Matt. 1:18-20; Luke 2:5), he nevertheless took Mary as his wife and became the legal father of Jesus (Matt. 1:20; Lk. 2:5), the birth was attested by revelations and visions (Matt. 1:20; Lk. 1:27), by divine direction he was called Jesus (Matt. 1:27; Lk. 2:11), and after the birth the family dwelt in Nazareth (Matt. 2:13; Lk. 2:39). However, while both accounts are concerned with showing the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in the Christ event, Matthew does so by explicit formulaic scriptural citations, whereas Luke weaves single words from the Old Testament into his sentences.

#### **Differences**

The divergences between Matthew and Luke include differences between their genealogies, and in overall plot and themes. The main characters in Matthew are Joseph, Angel, Magi, and Herod the Great; in Luke they are Zechariah, Gabriel, Elizabeth, Mary, Angels, Shepherds, Simeon, and Anna. While the secondary characters in Matthew include Mary, Chief Priests & Scribes, Archelaus, those in Luke are Herod the Great, Joseph, Caesar Augustus, Quirinius. The following points are found only in Matthew's account: the annunciation to Joseph, the star, the Magi, Herod's plot against Jesus, the massacre of the children at Bethlehem, and the flight into Egypt. On the other hand, points found only in Luke's account include: the annunciation to Mary, the story of Elizabeth, Zechariah, and John the Baptist's birth, the census that brings Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger, the announcement of Jesus' birth to the shepherds, the presentation of Jesus in the temple and the response of Simeon and Anna, Jesus lost and later found in the temple when he was a young boy.

### **(1b) Interpreting the presence of only five women in the genealogy story of Jesus**

Matthew includes five women in his genealogy: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, (Bathsheba) the wife of Uriah, and Mary the mother of Jesus. The first-four women were regarded as sinners; and their inclusion foreshadowed the role of Jesus as the Savior of sinful men. The women were regarded as foreigners and their inclusion indicate that Jesus was related by ancestry to the Gentiles. Furthermore, there is something irregular in the union of the women with their partners. This shows how God uses the unexpected to intervene on behalf of His planned Messiah.

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<sup>1</sup>Margareth Nutting Ralph, *And God Said What? An Introduction to the Biblical Literary Forms*, (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2005), p. 172.

### **(3) Expose and explain the Christology of Matthew.**

Matthew's Christology is interpreted in relation to the fact that it includes almost the whole of Mark's Gospel in it. So Mathew continues the traditional Resurrection Christology of the Synoptics. However, he has his distinctive and characteristic elements. The original intention and audience of Matthew's work is uncertain. Matthean Christology shows the mindset of the first and second generation Christians as the gospel was directed at them. It is a fact that it was intended for Jews - perhaps converted Rabbis, who were perhaps expelled from the synagogues mainly due to the positions they had taken in terms of their Christology. Yet it is doubtful given the fact that the notion of the Church is understood as comprising all of human kind.<sup>2</sup>

To Matthew, however, Jesus Christ was Immanuel (1:23), God with us. This is affirmed not only in 1:23 but implied in 28:20 in the promise of the risen Christ: "I am with you always." He was the son of David, the son of Abraham (1:1); but he was infinitely more. He was the Son of God (3:17), begotten of the Holy Spirit (1:18). He had been given all authority in Heaven and on earth (21:23), as the end-time Deliverer, alike yet altogether greater than Moses. It was his mission to save his people from their sins (1:21), giving to men the knowledge of God (11:27), bringing them under the kingdom of God (4:17), creating his church as a fellowship of persons submitting to the kingdom of God as it confronts them in the Christ of God, his anointed (16:13). Matthew presents Jesus as in many respects the new Moses, giving the new law and creating the new Israel; but to Matthew Jesus is far more than a greater Moses. He draws obvious parallels between Moses and Jesus: both were in Egypt; both were threatened by a king; Moses received the law at Mount Sinai while Jesus gave the new law from a mountain; each delivered his people from a form of slavery.

The Matthean Christ is the Royal Messiah. Here, Matthew presents Jesus - first and foremost the messianic king, the Son of the royal house of David, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The opening verse of Matthew's distinctive genealogy indicates the significance of Jesus as that He is not only Messiah but the 'Son of David.' At the time of his birth his mother was betrothed to Joseph who was himself a direct descendent of David (v. 16) and is addressed as 'son of David' (v.20). Jesus, 'who is called Christ' is therefore legally a scion of the ancient royal house of Israel, a 'Man born to be King'. This note of David's son-ship is sounded with some frequency in the Gospel. It is used by blind men on two occasions (9:17), but by the woman of Canaan (25:22), the crowds as Jesus entered Jerusalem (21:9), and the children in the Temple (21:15). That Jesus was born into a royal inheritance is further emphasized by the request of the astrologers (the Magi), on their arrival from the East, for information about the whereabouts of the child who was born to be "King of the Jews" (2:2). Matthew's Christology is also thematic in structure. The main theme: "Jesus is The Son of David, the Son of Abraham," has sub-themes under it, which include: Jesus who is called Christ (1:16), Out of Egypt I have called my Son (2:15), Truly, you are the Son of God (14:33), The Son of Man with his angels (16:27), and, Judging as a Shepherd (25:32).

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<sup>2</sup> C.I. David Joy, *Christology Re-Visited-Profiles and Prospects*, (Bangalore: ATC Publications, 2010), p. 39.