

Institution: Dominican Institute Ibadan **Course (Code):** Gospel of Matthew (TH 312)

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Question 1: About the “Infancy Narrative” a. Compare Matthew and Luke b. Within this narrative in the First Gospel, how do you interpret the presence of only five women in the genealogy story of Jesus?

Q. 1a – Comparison between the Infancy Narrative of Jesus in Matthew and Luke:

The infancy narrative of Jesus, which is the story of Jesus’ conception, birth and childhood, is contained only in two Gospel accounts of the New Testament Scripture which are Matthew and Luke.¹ Biblical study have shown that there are certain similarities and differences contained in both Gospel accounts or narratives.

In their similarities, both Gospel accounts record that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Mt 1:18 & Lk 1:35); Mary, mother of Jesus was a virgin before Jesus’ birth (Mt 1:18,20,23 & Lk 1:35); Mary was betrothed to Joseph before Jesus’ birth (Mt 1:18 & Lk 1:27, 2:5); Jesus was born in the last days of Herod’s reign (Mt 2:1-13 & Lk 1:5); Jesus was from the lineage of David (Mt 1:16 & Lk 1:27; 2:4); It was God’s instruction through the Angel that he was called Jesus (Mt 1:27 & Lk 2:11); Jesus was declared to be a Savior (Mt 1:27 & Lk 2:11); Joseph knew Mary’s situation before coming to her (Mt 1:18-20 & Lk 2:5); Joseph, notwithstanding of Mary’s situation, took her as wife and became the foster father of Jesus (Mt 1: 20,24,25 & Lk 2:5); the birth of Jesus was attested by revelations and visions (Mt 1:20 & Lk 1:27) and that Jesus’ family dwelt in Nazareth after his birth (Mt 2:13 & Lk 2:39).²

The differences between both narratives of the infancy of Jesus are as follows: Mathew mentions Joseph, Angel, Magi and Herod the Great as main characters in his narrative, while Luke mentions Zechariah, Gabriel, Elizabeth, Mary, Angels, Shepherds, Simeon and Anna as main characters (Mt 1:1-2:23 & Lk 1:5-2:52); Secondary characters in Matthew are Mary, Chief priests, Scribes and Archelaus, while, Luke has Herod the Great, Joseph, Caesar Augustus and Quirinius as secondary characters; Mathew records that Jesus was conceived in Bethlehem (2:1-23) while Luke records that Jesus was conceived in Nazareth (Lk 2:4,39); Mathew’s account says that Jesus was born in a house and Luke’s account says it was in a stable (2:7); Jesus was adored after birth by the Magi in Matthew’s account but Luke’s says by Shepherds (Mt 2:1-12 & Lk 2:8-20); Matthew records that the star was what directed the Magi to Jesus’ birth location, but Luke’s account has no star (Mt 2:2); Matthew’s account has no record of angels in the sky at Jesus’ birth but Luke’ has (Lk 2:1-14); and Matthew records the murder of some innocent children by king Herod but Luke’s account does not have such record (Mt 2:16-18). It shows that there are similarities and difference in both Gospel narratives.

Q. 1b – The Interpretation of the Presence of Only Five Women in the Genealogy of Jesus.

Typically, in the Jewish world of Matthew, genealogy mentions only men. But, strikingly, Matthew included five women in Jesus’ genealogy, namely; Tamar, Rahab, Ruth,

¹ Raymond E Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, New Updated Ed. (NY: Doubleday, 1993), pp. 6, 7, 25 & 26-33.

² Robert J. Karris, “The Gospel According to Luke” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Raymond E. Brown et al. (Eds.) (New Jersey Prentice Hall, Inc., 1990), p. 679

wife of Uriah (Bathsheba) and Mary, mother of Jesus (Mt 1:3-6). Biblical scholars have interpreted this inclusion of women in the genealogy of Jesus as being very significant.³ The first four women were prominent figures in the Hebrew scripture. There was something unusual about all these women; Mary did not conceive in a natural way (Mt 2:18); Others were either prostitutes or concubines – Rahab (a prostitute-Josh 2:1-7), Tamar (pretended prostitute-Gen 38:1-30), Ruth (a sexually forward widow-Ruth 1:16-17) and Bathsheba (woman taken in adultery-2 Sam 11:1-27). They were public sinners, except Mary. Also, all of them except Mary were not Israelites but foreigners in some way.⁴ Leon Morris comments that this shows that Christ came to save not only men or the strong, but all including women, sinners and righteous, Jews and non-Jews.⁵ Therefore, I think that the inclusion of women in the genealogy of Jesus can be interpreted as Matthew's way of saying that Christ's mission of salvation is for all.

Question. 3 – The Christology of Matthew

Christology simply means the presentation of the person of Jesus Christ.

Exposition: The Christology of Mathew reflects in his narrative which he introduced with a genealogy identifying Jesus as: “the Messiah, the Son of David, and Son of Abraham (Mt. 1:1), thereby presenting Jesus as the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:2-3) and the promised ‘messianic’ king (2 Sam 7:12-16) from the Davidic line who will bring salvation to his people.⁶ According to Matthew, Jesus is the Son of God (Mt 1:20;11:27;3:17 &16:16), Son of Man (Mt 8:20&18:11), Immanuel (1:23), The Suffering Servant (Mt 17:9-23; cf. Is 53:4), Great Prophet and Teacher, the New Law and the True Israel (Mt 1-28).

Explanation: 1. Jesus the Messiah: Matthew begins his presentation of the person of Jesus in his narrative by calling Him the Messiah, Son of David and Son of Abraham (Mt 1:1). This points to the influence of the Old Testament that continues throughout the Gospel. Abraham and David are very important and great figures in Israel's history. Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation and also the recipient of the mission to the Gentiles such that all nations would be blessed through him (Gen 12:2&Mt 8:11). David was Israel's greatest king and the prototype of the coming Messiah who will come from his lineage (2 Sam 7:12-16). Therefore, Jesus who is a descendant of David, according to Matthew, is the promised Messiah (King) who will bring salvation to his people. **2. Jesus as Son of God:** The Gospel of Matthew is written to convey unequivocally that Jesus is the Son of God. Matthew presented Jesus as being conceived by the Holy Spirit {God} (Mt 1:20); Jesus himself calls God his Father (Mt 11:27); God calls Jesus His Son at Jesus' Baptism (Mt 3:17) and Matthew himself uses the title ‘Son of God’ at significant places within the text (e.g. Mt 14:13; 16:16&27:40). **3. Jesus as Immanuel:** Immanuel (עִמָּנוּאֵל) is a Jewish phrase/word meaning “God is with us.” While the title could refer generally to Jesus as God's representative, there are indications in Matthew that Jesus is the very presence of God – Jesus is God himself (Mt 2:11;8:2 &9:2,4).

All these titles are intimately connected to the Old Testament and to the theme of promise and fulfilment. So, for Matthew, Jesus is both human and divine and fulfils all of God's promises and covenant with Abraham, Moses and David as the Savior of all (esp. believers).

³ Wim J.C Warren, “The five Women in Matthew's Genealogy,” CBQ 59 (1997): p. 292

⁴ J.P. Heil, “The Narrative Roles of the Women in Matthew's Genealogy,” *Biblica* 72(1990), p. 544,

⁵ Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI Eerdmans, 1992), p. 23

⁶ Cf. Mark I. Strauss, *Introducing Jesus* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2018), p. 42.