

EXAMINATION ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

ANSWER TO QUESTIONS 1 AND 3

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***BEING A TAKE-HOME EXAMINATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
THEOLOGY, DOMINICAN INSTITUTE IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE COURSE:***

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

(TH 312)

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JUNE 17TH, 2021

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Question 1a. Compare Matthew and Luke's account of the "Infancy Narrative"

Although Matthew and Luke contain the 'infancy narratives,' a close analysis shows that there are several significant similarities and many striking differences between the two accounts. The similarities include:

1. Jesus' parents are Mary and Joseph, who are engaged but not married at the time of conception (Matt 1: 18; Luke 1:27,34). 2. Joseph is of Davidic descent (Matt 1:16,20; Luke 1:27,32; 2:4). 3. There is an angelic announcement of the birth of the child (Matt 1:20-23; Luke 1:30-35). 4. Mary conceives through the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:18,20; Luke 1:35). 5. An angel directs that the child be named Jesus (Matt 1:21; Luke 1:31). 6. The angel states that Jesus is to be Savior (Matt 1:21; Luke 2: 11). 7. Jesus is born after Mary and Joseph are living together (Matt 1:24-25; Luke 2:5-6). 8. Jesus is born in Bethlehem at the time of Herod the Great (Matt 2: 1; Luke 2:4-6). 9. Jesus is raised in Nazareth (Matt 2:23; Luke 2:39).

However, the following key differences are relevant:

In Matthew, 1. the genealogy traces the descent of Jesus to David and Abraham; 2. the Annunciation is made to Joseph (1:19-24); 3. the star led the Magi to adoration (2:1-12); 4. the flight to Egypt because Herod plot to kill Jesus (2:13-15); 5. the massacre of the children at Bethlehem (2:16-18).

In Luke, 1. the story of Elizabeth, Zechariah, and the birth of John the Baptist (1:5-25; 57-80); 2. the annunciation is made to Mary (1: 26-38); 3. the journey to Bethlehem for a census (2:1-5) 4. Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in the manger (2:6-7); 5. the announcement of Jesus' birth to the shepherds (2:8-20); 6. the presentation of Jesus in the temple and the responses of Simeon and Anna (2:22-38); 7. Jesus lost and later found in the temple at age twelve (2:41-52).

Question 1b. Within this narrative in the First Gospel, how do you interpret the presence of only five women in the genealogy story of Jesus?

Mary is significant in Matthew's story purely as Jesus' mother. In addition to Mary, Matthew includes four women from the Old Testament. Their presence in the genealogy is unusual according to biblical patterns, but in this way, Matthew is calling the reader's attention to the selectivity practiced by God and thus of the work of divine providence in the ancestral list of the Messiah,¹ and also prepare the reader for the coming of non-Israelites to follow Israel's Messiah.² Their inclusion prefigure the role of Jesus as the Saviour of sinful humanity; points to the fact that Jesus was related to the Gentiles by ancestry; their presence could be understood from the angle of their contribution to the royal line of the Messiah.

¹ Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, p.71

² Characteristic of these four OT women is that: first, all four of them were non-Israelite (Tamar and Rahab were Canaanites, Ruth a Moabite, and Bathsheba the wife of Uriah a Hittite); secondly, their stories do not fit comfortably into traditional patterns of sexual morality.

Question 3. Expose and explain the Christology of Matthew.

To speak of Matthew's "Christology" is to refer to the entire portrayal of Jesus presented in this narrative. As such, it entails the meaning the gospel assigns to the life, ministry, destiny, and person of Jesus Christ. In discussing Christology in Matthew, three topics have gained considerable attention in recent exegesis: 1. the role of Christological titles in Matthew; 2. the use of Typologies e.g. Wisdom motifs; 3. Matthew's emphasis on Jesus as healer.

Titles Applied to Jesus

Studies in New Testament Christology rely on the titles conferred on Jesus in the Gospel and other New Testament books; titles such as 'Son of God,' 'Son of Man,' 'Son of David,' 'Christ,' 'Lord,' and others were important expressions of early Christological reflections because they convey the early Christians' confession of Jesus' identity. According to Kingsbury, the key title for Matthew's Christology is that of **"Son of God"**; this is the one title that occurs in every major section of the Gospel and correlates with essential features of Matthew's overall theology. It is a title that touches all aspects of Jesus' ministry and confirms his divine authority. For him, other titles for Jesus are subordinate to and find their ultimate meaning in Jesus' role as Son of God. The title of **"Son of David"** stresses Jesus' role as the Davidic Messiah sent to Israel, and also serves to focus on the guilt of Israel for not accepting him while the Gentiles (outcasts, the blind, the lame) acclaimed Jesus as 'Son of David' who was a healer and servant of God. The title of **"Son of Man"** is considered as public in character because it serves to describe Jesus in terms of his human relationship to the world, Israel, Gentiles, the crowds, and his opponents. For Kingsbury, this title has a two-fold function: first is to call attention to the divine authority by which Jesus acts, such as his power to forgive sins, his authority over the sabbath, and his mission to associate with sinners; second is to highlight the opposition Jesus encounters. The title of **"Lord"** is seen as a derivative title from the designation of Jesus as 'Son of Man' who will come in judgment; hence, it attributes an exalted position (one which is divine) to Jesus.

Use of Typology

Within the Jewish and biblical world, 'typology' played an important role in assigning meaning to a person or event; as such it is a significant feature of Matthew's Christology. The first typology is Jesus as the **"New Moses"** who becomes the new Law-giver. Another typology is the **"Wisdom motif"** which Matthew imported through his use of material from the Q source, as proposed by Jack Suggs. According to tradition, Wisdom is a personification of God's self – manifestation in creation and in the history of Israel, thus Matthew makes Jesus himself personified Wisdom, the revealer of God. The prominence of the Sermon on the Mount typifies Jesus as the definite **Teacher**. However, **"Jesus as Healer"** is also an important analysis into Matthew's Christology through a study of the miracle stories. According to Kingsbury, Matthew presents Jesus as the powerful Son of God in the midst of Israel, healing his people and gathering disciples.

Conclusion: from the above, we can say that the evangelist (Matthew) has employed a host of means to express his understanding of Jesus identity.