

O COME LET US ADORE HIM:
THE INFANCY NARRATIVES OF MATTHEW AND LUKE
MATTHEW 1-2 AND LUKE 1-3

Review of Characteristics of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke

The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew was a disciple of Jesus who had been a tax collector
Some early historians believe he was author while others are not sure
Composed between 70-110, with most scholars believe dates were between 80-90
One purpose was to prove that Jesus was Messiah based upon scripture
Audience was primarily Jewish, since Jews would have been most conversant
with scripture
Concerned about church. Only Gospel that mentions church
Teaching Gospel (Sermon on the Mount)
Eschatological Gospel (Matthew 24)

The Gospel of Luke

Luke was Gentile believer and companion of Paul
Some scholars suggest early date such as 63; most scholars 75-85
Primarily Gentile audience
Closest work to life of Christ
Gospel to poor and outcast
Gospel of prayer
Gospel of women
Universal Gospel

Infancy Narratives of Matthew and Luke

Genealogies of Two Gospels

The Theological Genealogy of Matthew 1: 1-17

Three divisions of history also reflect three stages of lives of people
Period before exile: Establishment of purpose and faithfulness to it
The exile: Straying from purpose and the consequences
Period after exile: New beginnings and return to purpose

The women in Jesus genealogy

Tamar, justified seductress (Genesis 38)
Rahab, harlot (Joshua 2: 1-7)
Ruth, member of despised race (Moabite, Ruth 1:4)
Bathsheba, wife of Uriah, compromised adulteress (II Samuel 11-12)
Mary, mother of Jesus, who could have been accused of sexual immorality

The inclusion of these particular women demonstrates:

The barrier between Gentiles and Jews is down
The barrier between males and females is down
The barrier between saint and sinner is down

Inclusion of non-Jews in God's divine plan from the beginning (Exodus 12: 38)

God's plan is broad enough to include those the community of faith sometimes
rejects

The Theological Genealogy of Luke 3: 23-17

Only Luke includes section from Adam to Abraham

Establishes Jesus not merely as seed of Abraham according to scriptural messianic expectations but as Son of God who is Savior of the world

The section from Abraham to David is the same

The section from David to Joseph is completely different

Possible suggestion is that Luke traces genealogy through Mary

Fact of the matter is that no one really knows

The visits of shepherds and wise men

Visit of shepherds were considerably earlier

Jesus in a manger according to prediction of angels (Luke 2: 12; 16)

No mention of shepherds

Visit of wise men

Scripture specifically states they came *after Jesus was born* (Matt. 2: 1)

The found Jesus in a house (Matt. 2: 11)

No mention of shepherds

Role of Mary and Joseph

Matthew, Joseph is primary actor

Angel speaks to Joseph not Mary (Matt. 1: 18-25; 2: 13-15; 19-23)

Luke, Mary is primary actor to whom angel comes (Luke 1: 26-56; 2: 16-19)

Simeon speaks to Mary (Luke 2: 33-35)

Infancy Narratives of Matthew and Luke

Accounts do not contradict each other but complement each other

Each gives details about the Lord's birth that we would not know without the other

Each understands the importance of Jewish tradition---both give genealogies

Genealogies also show the full humanity of the Lord Jesus

Each understands Jesus as Savior and Lord

Matthew 1: 21-23; Luke 2: 10-11

Each shows the universal appeal of the Lord Jesus

Matthew includes women and wise men

Luke includes despised shepherds and genealogy that goes back to Adam

OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S BIRTH (CHRISTMAS)

Time of year of birth probably spring (Luke 2: 8)

First two centuries the death/resurrection of Lord was more important than birth

Some believed that since the births of secular kings was celebrated, some early Christians believed that it was not fitting to celebrate the birth of the Lord as if he were just another king

December 25th ---Efforts of early church father to eclipse pagan Roman festival of Mithras, "Birthday of the Invincible Sun God"

Words of a third century theologian: We hold this day holy, not like the pagans because of the birth of the sun, but because of him who made it."

Essential meaning of Christmas: John 1: 14

(Example: birth of African American slaves and their descendants and lack of records)

OTHER INTERESTING INFORMATION

Epiphany: The Visit of Wise Men

Manifestation or firsts in Christ' life:

(Visit of wise men; baptism in River Jordan; wedding feast at Cana)

Inclusion of Gentiles in divine redemption

No biblical number given; three comes from mention of three gifts

Custom of names since ninth century:

Caspar, King of Tarsus; Melchior, King of Arabia; Balthazzar, King of Sheba

Twelve Days of Christmas

Secret Catholic catechism from 16th century England

A Partridge in a Pear Tree, Jesus Christ

Two turtledoves, Old and New Testament

Three French hens, Faith, Hope and Charity

Four birds calling, Four Gospels

Five golden rings, Five Books of Moses

Six geese a-laying, Six Days of Creation

Seven swans a-swimming, Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit (wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord)

Eight maids a-milking, Eight Beatitudes of Jesus

Nine ladies dancing, Nine Classification of Angels

Ten lords a-leaping, Ten Commandments

Eleven pipers piping, Eleven Faithful Disciples

Twelve drummers drumming, Twelve Beliefs Stated in Apostles Creed

Actual song predates 16th century, was of Gallic origin, as part of a twelve day secular festival