

## Sixth Form Summer Bridging Work

Welcome to GWA Sixth Form! You are about to embark on a busy and important two years of sixth form study.

Sixth form life is very different. You are going to feel more independent, empowered and responsible for your own learning. The expectation is that this journey is down to you. You need to commit and relish in the challenge of sixth form life; ambition, belief and commitment are essential for your success.

Below is a bridging activity designed for you to complete over Summer in preparation for your chosen course. By completing the task, you will be better prepared for the start of your course. Your A level teacher will check the work in September. Your commitment starts now!

Subject	Religious Studies: Christianity	
Key Question	What do the Birth narratives tell us?	
Resource List	<p>A level Specification</p> <p>Essential reading (Either listed as a web link or attached as a copy in additional resource section)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies/as-a-level/eduqas-a-level-religious-studies-spec-from-2016-e-.pdf?language_id=1">http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies/as-a-level/eduqas-a-level-religious-studies-spec-from-2016-e-.pdf?language_id=1</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Jesus-Birth.htm">http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Jesus-Birth.htm</a></li> <li>Do the "Infancy Narratives" of Matthew and Luke contradict each other?</li> <li>Teacher Notes: Birth Stories and Redaction criticism</li> <li>Infancy narratives_Oxford Biblical study</li> </ol>
Your Task	<p><b>There are 3 parts to your bridging task:</b></p> <p><b>Task 1:</b> Access and read the A level specification using the link above. Read Option A: Christianity - Theme One - section A only - Jesus: His Birth</p> <p><b>Task 2:</b> Familiarise yourself with the Bible passages listed below. You need to have your own copies of these (hard copies or electronic), with key events, people and indications of times highlighted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Matthew 1:18-2:23</li> <li>- Luke 1:26- 2:40</li> </ul> <p><b>Task 3:</b> Key Terms – Create a dictionary in your notes for the following key terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Redaction</li> <li>- Incarnation (and Doctrine of Incarnation)</li> <li>- Harmonisation</li> <li>- Credibility</li> </ul> <p><b>Task 4:</b> Complete the similarities and differences sheet (found in additional resources section).</p>	
Additional resources	Please see the attached articles for you to read and understand as well as the sheet you need for task 4.	

## Infancy narratives

The first two chapters of Matthew and Luke are in agreement that Jesus was conceived in Mary without the intervention of Joseph and that he was of the house of David. Otherwise there are considerable differences: Matthew describes the visit of the Magi, the journey into Egypt and temporary residence there, the slaughter by Herod the Great of the infants—all told from the point of view of Joseph. Luke has accounts of the birth of John the Baptist, an angelic message to Mary, the visit of the shepherds, Jesus' circumcision, the presentation in the Temple, and, finally, the record of Jesus' conversation in the Temple at the age of 12.

There are objections to treating these narratives as literal history. It is difficult to fit into a satisfactory time-scheme both the flight into Egypt (Matt.) and the return to the house at Nazareth (Luke): there are improbable features in the story of the travelling star and the journey to Egypt (Matt.) and uncertainty about the universal census under Augustus (Luke). As the son of an artisan carpenter it is unlikely that Jesus could have debated in the Temple at the age of 12. No other NT writer reveals any knowledge of the virginal conception. In the face of these difficulties about historicity (it is noted that there is no secular writing to corroborate the crime of Herod's massacre of the infants) many scholars prefer to see the narratives as Matthew's improvisation on the basis of OT texts, in accordance with accepted rabbinic principles of scriptural interpretation. It is significant that in Matthew the will of God is revealed in dreams, as it was to Joseph the OT patriarch; and just as the patriarch went to Egypt, so did the NT Joseph. Some scholars would recognize that as history these narratives are fragile, but would also hold that there is a core of fact on which the two evangelists have proceeded to proclaim their Christian faith about Jesus as Son of David and Son of God. This they did by showing that Jesus was the fulfilment of OT prophecy; the life, death, and resurrection were foreordained, not fortuitous. The narratives also answer the objections that Jesus was a Galilean and therefore an unlikely Messiah and that the circumstances of his birth were irregular.

Later Christian writings elaborate what they found in Matthew and Luke, much of which has become the stuff of popular piety and children's plays: the birth in a stable, Joseph the elderly widower with children from his former marriage, the three 'kings' and their names, and the belief that the birth miraculously took place not only through the conception by the Holy Spirit but also nine months later without damage to Mary's physical organs.

Modern theologians who maintain the truth of the virginal conception as literal fact believe it to be congruous with God's action in giving mankind a new beginning; Jesus' miraculous birth constitutes a decisive break with the old order. Other theologians suggest that without the masculine contribution there would be a defect in Jesus' humanity. They are therefore inclined to put the narratives into the genre of midrash, sparked off perhaps by the LXX translation of Isa. 7: 14 where the Hebrew *ha'almah* ('young woman') is translated, *he parthenos* ('the virgin'). Isaiah was concerned with the troubles of the 8th cent. BCE, not at that moment with a future Messianic age. The prophet declares that within nine months, and the birth of Emmanuel, the king's enemies would no longer be a threat, and soon there would be peace (Isa. 7: 15–16). See virgin birth.

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# Do the “Infancy Narratives” of Matthew and Luke Contradict Each Other?

by [Tim Staples](#)

Filed under [Historicity](#), [The Bible](#), [The Incarnation](#)

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What do atheist skeptics and liberal Scripture scholars have in common? They both love to find alleged “contradictions” in Scripture. Though there are many of these alleged “contradictions,” one of the favorites of both of these camps is one that you can expect to find being re-hashed again and again on the Internet—especially now that we are approaching Christmas—the “contradictions” found in what are commonly referred to as “the infancy narratives” of St. Matthew and St. Luke.

The late Fr. Raymond Brown, S.S., for example, who definitely made positive contributions to biblical study in the Church, also made some not-so-good contributions. In his book, [The Birth of the Messiah](#), p. 46, for example, he flatly declares the two infancy narratives “are contrary to each other.” Oy vey!

## So What Gives?

The two “infancy narratives” are found in [Luke 2:1-39](#) and [Matthew 1:18-2:23](#). We’ll use St. Luke’s account as our beginning point of reference and from there we’ll move forward inserting the alleged “contradictions” as we go.

I’ll give you a very important pointer here at the outset for clarity’s sake: **keep your eyes on the words I put in bold print** as I lay out the narrative for St. Matthew and St. Luke’s Gospels. These are the problem areas. And also keep in mind that these problems are not created by the texts of Scripture. They are created in the imaginations of those creating the so-called “contradictions.” Here we go:

According to St. Luke’s account, Mary and Joseph traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem because of the census called for by Caesar Augustus. It would be there that Mary “gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger...” (2:1-7) Are we good, so far?

Well, maybe not!

According to St. Matthew’s Gospel, there is no account of a journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. And this is true. **But skeptics claim St. Matthew portrays the Holy Family to have been living in Bethlehem, not Nazareth. There would have been no way for there to have even been a journey to Bethlehem if Matthew’s scenario were true. The Holy Family was already there!**

Moreover, **Jesus is not found in St. Luke’s “manger,” but [Matthew 2:11](#) says the Wise Men found him in a “house” in Bethlehem where the Holy Family was not staying in the Inn—or more precisely, the manger attached to an Inn—that we find in Luke’s Gospel. In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is depicted as being born in the family home of Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem where they had lived all along, contradicting St. Luke’s account.**

Herein we find the first of these narratives’ supposed irreconcilable contradictions.

## A Biblical Response:

There are two crucial assumptions made here that have nothing to do with the actual text of Scripture.

1. Because there is “no account of a journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem” in **St. Matthew’s Gospel**, this does not mean **St. Matthew’s Gospel** excludes it as a possibility. It doesn’t. It just means St. Matthew chose not to mention it.
2. And this is the most crucial error that, when understood properly, will end up dispelling most of the misconstrued contradictions we find out and about in cyberspace. The assumption is made that **St. Matthew’s** recording of the Wise Men following the star leads them to the Holy Family *at the time of Jesus’ actual birth*, and *in Bethlehem*. But the text does not actually say this.

Let me explain.

First, let’s look at [Matthew 2:1](#):

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, Wise Men from the East came to Jerusalem...”

Critics nearly unanimously interpret this to mean that **St. Matthew** is claiming the Wise Men arrived in Bethlehem at the time Christ was born. The truth is: it doesn’t say that. It simply says Christ was born during the days of King Herod and that the Wise Men came in those days to see—as they themselves asked upon their arrival in Jerusalem—where they could find “he who has been born king of the Jews” ([Matt. 2:2](#)). [Matthew 2:1-2](#) does not specify how much time had transpired since the actual birth of Jesus.

However, having said that, though [Matthew 2:1-2](#) doesn’t specify the time of Christ’s birth, we do have clues elsewhere that indicate the Wise Men did not arrive at the time Christ was actually born; rather, *one to as much as two years later*.

## Little Drummer Boy History

I know what you're thinking. Or, at least, what you *should* be thinking. I love "The Little Drummer Boy," too! (Yes, that was said "tongue and cheek," folks!) My family and I watch it every year at Christmas! And multiple times (we have the DVD). (It's great having young children in the house. It gives me an excuse to watch all those kid-oriented Christmas specials!) But unfortunately, "The Little Drummer Boy," as well as a whole slew of atheists and liberal theologians, has his (and their) time-line all wrong here. Perhaps there is a lesson here about getting one's theology, or history, through children's Claymation television shows? At any rate, the Nativity is commonly portrayed with Magi, Shepherds, and yes, maybe even the little drummer boy, all together at the manger with the Holy Family and the new-born baby Jesus. But that is not the way the Bible portrays it. First of all, when the Magi "saw his star" in the East that indicated the birth of the "king of the Jews," it was only then that they began their journey to Israel, according to [Matthew 2:2](#). And remember, this was before you could jump on a commuter jet. Coming from Persia, most likely, they would have had to travel around 970 miles to get to Jerusalem. At least, that's the distance from modern Tehran, anyway. Even if you move eastward as far as modern Bagdad as their starting point, they would have still had to travel at least 500 miles.

## Why is this significant?

[Matthew 2:3-7](#) tells us that after the Wise Men arrived in Jerusalem and began asking about the location of "he who has been born king of the Jews" (notice, they did not say "new-born king" as many assume, they said, "he who has been born king of the Jews..."), Herod was troubled, for obvious reasons. He was corrupt and didn't want another "king" to threaten his position of power. So, after "assembling all of the chief priests, and scribes" (v. 4), and asking them where the Messiah was to be born, they informed him of **Micah's** prophecy (**Micah 5:2**) that foretold Bethlehem as the birthplace of the coming king. Herod then decided to pretend he was interested in welcoming, and worshipping, this new "king of Israel" just as the Magi were. He really wanted to find out precisely where this king was located, so he could eliminate the threat... permanently. But notice what **Matthew 2:7** says:

"Then Herod summoned the Wise Men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared, and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.""

Herod wanted to know "when the star appeared" so he could know the approximate age of the child. This indicates that the star appeared to the Magi when Jesus was born, *before* their journey to Israel. This eliminates the possibility of the Magi meeting the shepherds and the Holy Family at the manger. Moreover, after God warned the Magi "not to return to Herod" in [Matthew 2:12](#), and Herod later realizes they were not coming back to give him his desired information about the location of Jesus, in **2:16**, "in a rage" he determined to "kill all of the children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, *according to the time which he had ascertained from the Wise Men*" (emphasis added). Thus, if we allow for Herod hedging his bet to make sure he kills the right child, the information he garnered from the Magi would probably have placed the birth of Christ at about a year or so before the Magi's arrival. Herod would probably want a cushion on each side of the approximate time of Christ's birth. Most importantly, this would indicate Christ would have been *1 to at most 2 years-old* (though I would again say it would be unlikely Christ would have been a full two years-old) at the time the Wise Men arrived in Jerusalem to find the Christ-child. This would have been 1 to 2 years *after the nativity of St. Luke's Gospel*.

Many will say at this point that a journey of 500 to 1,000 miles would not take that long. If you say the caravan of the Wise Men could travel about 5 to 10 miles per day, it would have taken anywhere from two to seven months of travel. This is true, but this does not take into account many variables. You didn't just jump into a car or airplane and go. It would have taken time to plan the trip, gather supplies, security, etc. These and more contingencies are simply not revealed to us in the text. But we do get hints here about what Herod concluded from his personal interview of the Magi themselves. The text of Scripture indicates it was the Magi that revealed the time of Christ's birth to have been long before the Magi's arrival in Nazareth.

## Check Your Assumptions at the Door

Once we get the above timeline right, the "contradictions" between "infancy narratives" are not so contradictory any longer. We are not going to get to all of the "contradictions" claimed, but as one other example, **the claim is also made that when the Wise Men were sent to Bethlehem by Herod, then that would naturally have been where they ended up finding the Holy Family when they arrive at the place "where the child was" in [Matthew 2:9](#). This is the foundation for the "contradiction" between St. Luke's "manger" and St. Matthew's "house," and more.** The problem is: the text doesn't say the Wise Men actually found the Christ-child *in Bethlehem*. This is another non-biblical assumption.

In fact, [Matthew 2:9](#) tells us that after Herod ordered the Magi to go to Bethlehem, it would be the miraculous star that would actually guide them to Christ. The text doesn't explicitly say this, but we can reasonably assume the star would not lead them to the wrong location! If the Wise Men would have then headed to Bethlehem, the Holy Family would have been long gone. The star would have led them to Nazareth, where, **St. Luke** tells us, in **2:39**, "[the Holy Family] returned," but only after "they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord."

## Back to St. Luke's Gospel

It is crucial to understand that other than the mention of Christ's actual birth in [Matthew 2:1](#), there is no overlap with Luke's infancy narrative and Matthew's. Here's a time-line:

[Matthew 2:1](#) mentions Christ's actual birth in Bethlehem. This sole overlap parallels [Luke 2:6-7](#).

But because we know **St. Matthew's Gospel** then leaps forward to the story of the Magi, one to at most two years after Christ's birth, the story of the shepherd and the angels finding Christ in Bethlehem in [Luke 2:8-20](#), the circumcision of Christ while the Holy Family was still in Bethlehem in [Luke 2:21](#), the "Presentation of the Lord" in the temple of [Luke 2:22-36](#) (a six-mile trip that would take the better part of a day to walk), and the "return to Nazareth" of [Luke 2:39](#), all happen within about 40 or so days after Christ's birth, and long before the Magi arrive at Nazareth in search of the "king of Israel."

With this in mind, we can now eliminate the above-mentioned "contradictions" quite easily:

1. The "home" in [Matthew 2:11](#) does not conflict with the "manger" in [Luke 2:7](#). The "home" was in Nazareth where the Holy Family had traveled well over a year before the coming of the Magi.
2. **Matthew's Gospel** never actually says the "home" mentioned in **2:11** was *in Bethlehem*.
3. The Wise Men were "sent" to Bethlehem by Herod, but the text never says that is where they ended up. We know, in fact, they would have ended up in Nazareth where Christ actually was, not Bethlehem.

## Another Assumption Exploded

As I said above, in this brief post, we are not going to eliminate all of the errors that are out there claiming contradictions between the infancy narratives. In fact, there are some who argue for contradictions even within the narratives themselves. But if you keep in mind the historical timeline laid out here, you can

deal with most of the claimed anomalies.

Here is one final example:

**Matthew 2:23** tells us the Holy Family never went to live in Nazareth until after the coming of the Magi and the flight into Egypt. It was only then, the text says, “[Joseph and the Holy Family] went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth.” Yet, St. Luke says, it was after the 40 days of purification after the birth of Christ that “[the Holy Family] returned into Galilee, to... Nazareth.”

Actually, **Matthew 2:23** does not say the Holy Family “first” went to Nazareth after the flight into Egypt. That is another unbiblical assumption. After being warned by God to flee Herod’s wrath and travel to Egypt in **Matthew 2:13-14**, and then after being told by an angel of the Lord to return to Israel, in **Matthew 2:20**, it appears St. Joseph’s desire was to go back to his family’s native Bethlehem in Judea, but because Herod’s son, Archela’us, was reigning there, “he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream” he went to Nazareth instead (**Matthew 2:22-23**).

We have to remember that the inspired authors place emphases on particular aspects of the life of Christ and the Holy Family for particular theological reasons. **St. Matthew** is writing to a Jewish Christian community; thus, he emphasizes both Christ’s birth in Bethlehem to fulfill the Old Testament prophecy of **Micah 5:2 (Matthew 2:5-6)**, and the fulfillment of the Oral Tradition, or word “spoken by the prophets,” that Christ would be “called a Nazarene” (**Matthew 2:23**). **St. Luke**, the only inspired Evangelist who was also a Gentile, did not seem as interested in pointing those things out.

For **St. Matthew’s** purpose, it would not suffice for him to simply mention Jesus’ brief sojourn in Bethlehem as an infant and toddler; he had to be *raised in Nazareth* in order to be “called a Nazarene.” Thus, the emphasis of St. Matthew is on Christ and the Holy Family coming to Nazareth where Christ would be raised in order to fulfill the prophecy “spoken by the prophets” (**Matthew 2:23**). But he never says this was the “first” time they had been there.

## Final Thought

There is much more to be done here—multiple alleged “contradictions” to clear up. But to do that, we must establish a true context for Scripture free from assumptions that don’t jive with the entirety of the text.

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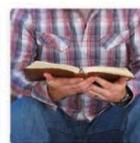
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Written by [Tim Staples](#)

Tim Staples is Director of Apologetics and Evangelization at [Catholic Answers](#). Raised a Southern Baptist, Tim fell away from faith during his childhood. He later joined the Marine Corps, and during his final year in the Marines, he began a two-year search for the truth. That eventually led to him converting to Catholicism in 1988. He spent the following six years in formation for the priesthood, earning a degree in philosophy from St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Overbrook, Pennsylvania. He then studied theology on a graduate level at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, for two years. Realizing that his calling was not to the priesthood, Tim left the seminary in 1994 and has been working in Catholic apologetics and evangelization ever since.

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## Theme 1A The Birth of Jesus

### Teacher's NOTES

**A Central Insight:** Redaction Criticism is just one type of historical criticism. It focuses on how an author used various sources – their editorial choices. One looks at those choices and tries to get a sense of the themes (or even the theology) dear to that author. If two writers have access to the same source, but tell the story in two different ways, then Redaction criticism can be done. Even if these writers do not have access to the same source, but share a common theme, one can still make educated guesses as to their biases. Later in this theme students are asked to consider the differences between a ‘substantial presence’ model and a ‘kenotic’ model when it comes to how the question of Jesus’ divinity and humanity. Substantial presence puts the ‘accent’ on the divinity of Jesus, seeing that the human Jesus had all of the divine attributes from birth. The Kenotic model (see Philippians 2: 3-11) puts the accent on the humanity of Jesus, stressing that Christ voluntary gave up some divine attributes at birth – so that there was a real risk in the incarnation. Students should be able to identify both points of view in the birth narratives.

**Activity:** Invite students to look at two reports of the same news event that reveal the biases of those publications (for example a Fox news report of the Pope’s criticisms of Trump vs. an NPR report). Have them report on the similarities and differences; then, make the point that they have performed redaction criticism. They will then be doing this same kind of activity with the birth narratives from Matthew and Luke. They will be listing similarities and differences. Then, they can make some hypotheses as to the biases of the two editors (Matthew and Luke).

#### Key Quotes:

‘Redaction Criticism suggests that what we have in the gospels are four portraits of Jesus which were written to influence a particular group of readers/hearers.’ –Steve Moyise (75)

‘The term redaction in Gospel criticism describes the editorial work carried out by the evangelists on their sources when they composed the Gospels’ – Stephen S. Smalley<sup>1</sup>

#### Resource:

Steve Moyise, *Introduction to Biblical Studies 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013). This is an excellent, readable book with a helpful section on Redaction criticism – it will also come in handy for other parts of this specification (note: Moyise does not deal specifically with the birth narratives in relation to Redaction criticism.)

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen S. Smalley ‘Redaction Criticism (p.181ff.) in I Howard Marshall, ed. *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (Eugene, Oregon, Wipf & Stock publishers 1977), 181.

# The Birth of Jesus:

## Comparing the Gospel Infancy Narratives

by Felix Just, S.J., Ph.D.

### Introduction to Matthew 1–2 and Luke 1–2:

The birth of Jesus is narrated at the beginning of the **Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke**, but is not mentioned in Mark, and alluded to very differently in John. Although the story may seem familiar, a close analysis shows that there are *many significant differences* between the Matthean and Lukan accounts, with *hardly anything in common* between them. The following are the only commonalities, and even these contain significant differences in the details:



### Common Elements in Both Infancy Narratives:

- Main characters: *Mary, Joseph, Jesus*
- Supporting characters: *Angels, Holy Spirit*
- Titles attributed to Jesus: *Christ, son of David*
- Heritage: *children of Abraham/Israel, house of David*
- Place names: *Nazareth in Galilee, Bethlehem in Judea*
- Historical period: *during the reign of King Herod*

### Different Contents of the Two Accounts:

<a href="#">Matthew 1–2</a> (only 48 verses, including genealogy)	<a href="#">Luke 1–2</a> (total of 132 verses, plus 16 more in genealogy)
1:1 - Title of the Gospel	1:1-4 - Literary introduction to the Gospel
1:2-17 - The Genealogy of Jesus (from Abraham to King David to Exile to Joseph)	(Genealogy included later, in Luke 3:23-38)
-	1:5-25 - Angel Gabriel announces John the Baptist's birth
1:18-24 - An unnamed angel announces Jesus' birth to Joseph in a dream	1:26-38 - Angel Gabriel announces Jesus' birth to Mary while awake
-	1:39-56 - Mary visits Elizabeth (incl. Mary's "Magnificat")
-	1:57-58 - Elizabeth gives birth to her son (John the Baptist)
-	1:59-80 - John the Baptist is circumcised & named (incl. Zechariah's "Benedictus")
-	2:1-5 - Joseph & Mary journey to Bethlehem for the census

1:25 & 2:1a - <b>Mary's son is born</b> in Bethlehem of Judea, and <b>named Jesus</b>	2:6-7 - <b>Mary gives birth to her son</b> in Bethlehem of Judea
-	2:8-14 - Angels appear to some shepherds ( <i>incl. the "Gloria" of the angels</i> )
-	2:15-20 - Shepherds visit Mary & Joseph & the infant lying in a manger
-	2:21 - The infant is circumcised & <b>named Jesus</b>
-	2:22-38 - Jesus is presented to God in the Temple ( <i>incl. Simeon's "Nunc Dimittis"</i> )
2:1b-12 - Magi from the East come; they first visit Herod, then Jesus	-
2:13-21 - Joseph & Mary flee to Egypt with the child Jesus; the Innocents are murdered; the Holy Family returns to Israel	-
2:22-23 - They journey to Nazareth	2:39-40 - The family returns to Nazareth
-	2:41-52 - At age twelve, Jesus & his parents visit the Jerusalem Temple

Click here for more detail on the structure of [Luke's Infancy Narrative](#)

### Different Theological Emphases of Each Narrative:

.	Matthew 1–2	Luke 1–2
<b>Driving Force:</b>	<i>Hebrew Scriptures</i> are fulfilled (1:22-23; 2:5-6, 15, 17-18, 23)	<i>Holy Spirit</i> is at work (1:1, 35, 41, 67; 2:25-27)
<b>Jesus' Heritage:</b>	* Son of <i>David</i> , son of <i>Abraham</i> (1:1-17) * Legal son of Joseph, but child of the Holy Spirit (1:18-25)	* Son of <i>God</i> , son of <i>Mary</i> by the Holy Spirit (1:26-38) * Heir to David's throne, over the house of Judah (1:32-33; 2:4)
<b>Names &amp; Titles:</b>	* Messiah (1:1, 16-18; 2:4) * Jesus: "For he will save his people from their sins" (1:21, 25) * <i>Emmanuel</i> : "God with us" (1:23) * <i>King of the Jews</i> (2:2) * "A ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel" (2:6) * Nazorean (2:23)	* Jesus (1:31; 2:21) * Son of the Most High; Son of God (1:32, 35) * He will be great, holy, full of wisdom and grace (1:32, 35; 2:40) * "Of his kingdom there will be no end" (1:33) * A <i>Savior</i> is born... who is Messiah and <i>Lord</i> (2:11, 26) * A light for revelation to Gentiles and for glory to Israel (2:32)
<b>Characters Emphasized:</b>	<i>Men</i> : King David, Joseph of Nazareth, Magi from the East, King Herod, chief priests & scribes, Ethnarch Archelaus	<i>Women</i> : Virgin Mary of Nazareth, Elizabeth, Anna <i>Poor &amp; Aged</i> : Shepherds, Zechariah, Simeon
<b>Themes:</b>	obstacles, conflict, fear, murder, politics	glory, praise, joy; poverty, humility, faith
<b>OT Parallels:</b>	Dreamer Joseph ( <a href="#">Genesis 37–41</a> ) Baby Moses ( <a href="#">Exodus 1–2</a> )	Birth of Samson ( <a href="#">Judges 13</a> ) Birth of Samuel ( <a href="#">1 Sam 1–2</a> )

<b>Number Symbolism:</b>	[King] David = 14 (DVD = 4+6+4); three groups of 14 generations in genealogy; focus on royalty	70 weeks from Gabriel's first Annunciation to Presentation in Temple? related to 70-week prophecy by angel Gabriel in Daniel 9:24-27?
<b>Distinctive Images:</b>		

### Old Testament Quotations and Allusions in Matthew's Infancy Narrative:

Matthew's Gospel	Old Testament Texts
<b>Matt 1:3b-6a</b> - [direct quotation of ten generations from Perez to David]	<b>Ruth 4:18-22</b> - [ten generations from Perez to David]
<b>Matt 1:22-23</b> - All this took place to <u>fulfill</u> what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him <b>Emmanuel</b> ," which means, " <b>God is with us</b> ."	<b>Isaiah 7:14</b> - "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him <b>Immanuel</b> ." <b>Isaiah 8:8b, 10</b> - "It [the Assyrian army ] will sweep on into Judah as a flood, and, pouring over, it will reach up to the neck; and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, <b>O Immanuel</b> ... / Take counsel together, but it shall be brought to naught; speak a word, but it will not stand, for <b>God is with us</b> ."
<b>Matt 2:2</b> - [Magi ask Herod]: "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his <b>star</b> at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." (cf. 2:8)	<b>Numbers 24:17-19</b> - "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near-- <i>a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel</i> ; it shall crush the borderlands of Moab, and the territory of all the Shethites. / Edom will become a possession, Seir a possession of its enemies, while Israel does valiantly. / <i>One out of Jacob shall rule</i> , and destroy the survivors of Ir."
<b>Matt 2:5-6</b> - [scribes tell King Herod where the Messiah will be born]: "In <b>Bethlehem</b> of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: / 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"	<b>Micah 5:2</b> - "But you, O <b>Bethlehem</b> of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days."
<b>Matt 2:11b</b> - Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of <b>gold</b> , <b>frankincense</b> , and myrrh.	<b>Isaiah 60:3, 6</b> - "Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn... A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring <b>gold</b> and <b>frankincense</b> , and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD."
<b>Matt 2:14-15</b> - Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, / and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to <u>fulfill</u> what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, " <i>Out of Egypt I have called my son</i> ."	<b>Hosea 11:1</b> - "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and <i>out of Egypt I called my son</i> ."

<p><b>Matt 2:17-18</b> - Then was <u>fulfilled</u> what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: / "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."</p>	<p><b>Jeremiah 31:15</b> - "Thus says the LORD: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more."</p>
<p><b>Matt 2:23</b> - There [in Galilee] he [Joseph] made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be <u>fulfilled</u>, "He will be called a <b>Nazorean</b>."</p>	<p><b>Isaiah 11:1</b> - "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch (<i>nezer</i>) shall grow out of his roots."</p>

## What does Mark's Gospel Say about Jesus' Heritage?

The Gospel according to Mark does *not* contain a *narrative* of Jesus' birth, but it does make a few brief references to his family heritage:

- Mark's Gospel does *not* directly tell us *where* Jesus was born, and it *never* mentions the town *Bethlehem*;
  - Several times it calls him "**Jesus of Nazareth**" (1:24; 10:47; 16:6) or "**the Nazarene**" (14:67).
  - These references do not necessarily imply that Jesus was *born* there, but at least indicate that he *grew up* in the town of Nazareth in Galilee (cf. 1:9).
- Mark's Gospel says *nothing* about who Jesus' earthly *father* was, nor does it ever mention *Joseph* by name;
  - In contrast, Jesus several times refers to God as his "**Father**" (8:38; 14:36; see also 11:25; 13:32).
- Only *once* does Mark's Gospel mention the name of Jesus' *mother*, calling him "**the son of Mary**" (6:3).
  - His **mother** is referred to in only one other pericope, when she (along with his "brothers and sisters") comes to see Jesus while he is preaching in Capernaum (3:31-35).
  - Although Mark tells us that Jesus had "**brothers and sisters**" (3:31-32), and even names four of his "brothers" (6:3; James, Joses, Judas, and Simon), it never specifies if these were older or younger siblings, nor whether these were children of his own mother and/or father, or other close relatives (using "brother/sister" in an extended sense for what we might call "cousins," as was common in ancient Jewish culture).
  - At the crucifixion and burial of Jesus, Mark's Gospel mentions the presence of a certain "*Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses*" (15:40; cfr. 15:47; 16:1); some scholars argue that these references are to Mary, the mother of Jesus, while other scholars believe it refers to another Mary (since these were all very common names at the time).
  - See also a separate page about [The Family of Jesus](#).
- Mark mentions Jesus' *occupation* only once, calling him a "**carpenter**" (6:3; the Greek word τέκτων/*tektōn* could also mean "craftsman" or "construction worker").
  - In contrast, Matthew's Gospel only calls Jesus "the carpenter's son" (Matt 13:55), while Luke and John say nothing about what occupation Jesus had before beginning his public ministry.