

Yesterday's blog was about the account of Jesus' birth in Luke; today I talk about Matthew. Even a casual reading shows that these are two very different accounts. Matthew has nothing about the birth of John the Baptist, the Annunciation, the census, the trip to Bethlehem, the shepherds, the presentation in the Temple. Matthew's version, as a result, is much shorter. Most of his stories are found only in his account. And some of the differences from Luke appear to involve downright discrepancies, as I will try to show in another post.

For now: Matthew's version. Matthew begins with a genealogy of Jesus. Luke also has a genealogy, but it is given after Jesus is baptized in ch. 3, instead of where you would expect it, at his birth in ch. 1. I'll explain my view of that in a later post. After the genealogy of Matthew in which Jesus is traced to David, the greatest king of Israel, and to Abraham, the father of Israel, we move right to the birth story.

Mary has conceived by the Holy Spirit; Joseph wants to divorce her quietly; he learns from an angel in a dream that she has conceived by the Holy Spirit, and that it has all been in order to fulfill the prophecy of Isa. 7:14, which Matthew quotes as saying "a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel." They don't actually call him Emmanuel, of course (a Hebrew term that means "God is with us") but Jesus (which means "salvation.")

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