



The History of Christmas

Luke 1:26-28

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

²⁸ And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

Mark 15:33-39

Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying,

“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”

which is translated, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

³⁵ Some of those who stood by, when they heard that, said, “Look, He is calling for Elijah!” ³⁶ Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink, saying, “Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down.” ³⁷ And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.

³⁸ Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹ So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!”

The History of Christmas

- I. The Infancy Narratives & The Passion Narratives**
- II. The Extraordinary Infancy of Christ**
- III. The Genealogies & Opening Chapter(s)**
- IV. The Prophecies of Jesus' Birth**

THE BIRTH OF THE MESSIAH

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A COMMENTARY ON THE INFANCY NARRATIVES

IN THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW AND LUKE

BY

Raymond E. Brown, S.S.

NEW UPDATED EDITION

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New Haven & London

The Infancy Narratives & The Passion Narratives

People who know little of Jesus, beyond his death on the cross and his resurrection, are often acquainted with the Christmas story, which accordingly offers a channel through which the Gospel can be made intelligible to them.

Brown, R. E. (1993). [*The birth of the Messiah: a commentary on the infancy narratives in the gospels of Matthew and Luke*](#) (New Updated Edition., p. 6). Yale University Press.

The Infancy Narratives & The Passion Narratives

Philippians 2:6-8

⁶ *Though He was in the form of God,
He did not consider being equal with God something to exploit.*

⁷ *But He emptied himself
by taking the form of a slave
and by becoming like human beings.*

When He found himself in the form of a human,

⁸ *He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross. CEB*

The Infancy Narratives & The Passion Narratives

Romans 1:3-4

God promised this good news about his Son ahead of time through his prophets in the holy scriptures. His Son was descended from David. ⁴ He was publicly identified as God's Son with power through his resurrection from the dead, which was based on the Spirit of holiness. This Son is Jesus Christ our Lord. CEB

The Infancy Narratives & The Passion Narratives

Have I ever thought of the Christmas story
as revealing Jesus as
100% Man and 100% God?

The Infancy Narratives & The Passion Narratives

Mark 1:9-11

About that time, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and John baptized Him in the Jordan River.

¹⁰ While He was coming up out of the water, Jesus saw heaven splitting open and the Spirit, like a dove, coming down on Him. ¹¹ And there was a voice from heaven:

*“You are my Son, whom I dearly love;
in you I find happiness.”*

CEB

The Infancy Narratives & The Passion Narratives

- Birth – Matthew 1 & Luke 2
- Baptism – Mark 1:9-11
- Transfiguration – Mark 9:2-8
(Matthew 17:1-8; Luke 9:28-36)

The Infancy Narratives & The Passion Narratives

Mark 6:51-52

51 Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. 52 For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened. NKJV

51 He got into the boat, and the wind settled down. His disciples were so baffled they were beside themselves. 52 That's because they hadn't understood about the loaves. Their minds had been closed so that they resisted God's ways. CEB

The Infancy Narratives & The Passion Narratives

Mark 15:38-39

*The curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹ When the centurion, who stood facing Jesus, saw how he died, he said, “**This man was certainly God’s Son.**”*

CEB

The Infancy Narratives & The Passion Narratives

Am I going to echo this “not seeing Jesus for who He is” relationship that was prominent in the early life of the Disciples?

OR

I am looking for the power of Christ and the character of Christ that is seen in the Passion Narratives and trying to figure out HOW TO respond to what I discover?

QUESTIONS:

- Not clearly “seeing Jesus” = Because I do not know Him well enough?
- Looking for His power/His character = WHERE?

The Extraordinary Infancy of Christ

Matthew 14:33

Then those in the boat worshipped Jesus and said, “You must be God’s Son!”

Matthew 16:16

Simon Peter said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” CEB

The Extraordinary Infancy of Christ

- 1) The parents to be are Mary and Joseph who are legally engaged or married, but have not yet come to live together or have sexual relations (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 forthcoming birth of the child (Matt 1:20–23; Luke 1:30–35).
- 4) The conception of the child by Mary is not through intercourse with her husband (Matt 1:20, 23, 25; Luke 1:34).
- 5) The conception is through the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35).
- 6) There is a directive from the angel that the child is to be named Jesus (Matt 1:21; Luke 1:31).
- 7) An angel states that Jesus is to be Savior (Matt 1:21; Luke 2:11).
- 8) The birth of the child takes place after the parents have come to live together (Mt.1:24–25; Lk 2:5–6).
- 9) The birth takes place at Bethlehem (Matt 2:1; Luke 2:4–6).
- 10) The birth is chronologically related to the reign (days) of Herod the Great (Matt 2:1; Luke 1:5).
- 11) The child is reared at Nazareth (Matt 2:23; Luke 2:39).

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QUESTIONS:

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- Where can I look for Jesus’ power?
- Am I settled in my experience with Him thinking I know when/where I will see it?

The Genealogies & Opening Chapters

Matthew 1:1-17

1 A record of the ancestors of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham:

2 Abraham was the father of Isaac.

Isaac was the father of Jacob.

Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.

3 Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar.

Perez was the father of Hezron.

Hezron was the father of Aram.

4 Aram was the father of Amminadab.

Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.

Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

5 Salmon was the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab.

Boaz was the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth.

Obed was the father of Jesse.

6 Jesse was the father of David the king.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah.

7 Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.

Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.

Abijah was the father of Asaph.

8 Asaph was the father of Jehoshaphat

Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.

10 Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.

Manasseh was the father of Amos.

Amos was the father of Josiah.

11 Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his brothers.

This was at the time of the exile to Babylon.

12 After the exile to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel.

Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.

13 Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.

Abiud was the father of Eliakim.

Eliakim was the father of Azor.

14 Azor was the father of Zadok.

Zadok was the father of Achim.

Achim was the father of Eliud.

15 Eliud was the father of Eleazar.

Eleazar was the father of Matthan.

Matthan was the father of Jacob.

16 Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary—of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Christ.

17 So there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen generations from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen generations from the exile to Babylon to the Christ. CEB

The Genealogies & Opening Chapters

Luke 3:23-38

Jesus was about 30 years old when he began his ministry. People supposed that he was the son of Joseph son of Heli²⁴ son of Matthat son of Levi son of Melchi son of Jannai son of Joseph²⁵ son of Mattathias son of Amos son of Nahum son of Esli son of Naggai²⁶ son of Maath son of Mattathias son of Semein son of Josech son of Joda²⁷ son of Joanan son of Rhesa son of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel son of Neri²⁸ son of Melchi son of Addi son of Cosam son of Elmadam son of Er²⁹ son of Joshua son of Eliezer son of Jorim son of Matthat son of Levi³⁰ son of Simeon son of Judah son of Joseph son of Jonam son of Eliakim³¹ son of Melea son of Menna son of Mattatha son of Nathan son of David³² son of Jesse son of Obed son of Boaz son of Sala son of Nahshon³³ son of Amminadab son of Admin son of Arni son of Hezron son of Perez son of Judah³⁴ son of Jacob son of Isaac son of Abraham son of Terah son of Nahor³⁵ son of Serug son of Reu son of Peleg son of Eber son of Shelah³⁶ son of Cainan son of Arphaxad son of Shem son of Noah son of Lamech³⁷ son of Methuselah son of Enoch son of Jared son of Mahalalel son of Cainan³⁸ son of Enos son of Seth son of Adam son of God. CEB

The Genealogies & Opening Chapters

“They were with Jesus in his ministry they will be the chief human agents in the early days of the Church. The risen Jesus appears to them and instructs them, So that the continuity with what has preceded will be clear the Holy Spirit comes upon them after Jesus departs, so that the continuity with what follows will be clear.”

Brown, R. E. (1993). [*The birth of the Messiah: a commentary on the infancy narratives in the gospels of Matthew and Luke*](#) (New Updated Edition., pp. 237–238). Yale University Press.

The Genealogies & Opening Chapters

Luke 1

- Luke's purpose – v.s. 1-4
- John the Baptist Birth Foretold – v.s. 5-25
- Jesus' Birth Foretold – v.s. 26-38
- Mary Visits Elizabeth – v.s. 39-45
- Mary Praises God – v.s. 46-66
- Zechariah's Prophecy – v.s. 67-80

Luke 1:76-79

You, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way.⁷⁷ You will tell his people how to be saved through the forgiveness of their sins.⁷⁸ Because of our God's deep compassion, the dawn from heaven will break upon us,⁷⁹ to give light to those who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide us on the path of peace."CEB

The Genealogies & Opening Chapters

Luke 1

- Luke's purpose – v.s. 1-4
- John the Baptist Birth Foretold – v.s. 5-25
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Romans 8:10-11

¹⁰ And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. CEB

The Genealogies & Opening Chapters

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QUESTIONS:

- Not clearly “seeing Jesus” = Because I do not know Him well enough?
- Where can I look for Jesus’ power?
- Am I settled in my experience with Him thinking I know when/where I will see it?
- Do I scratch my head like the Disciples did during Jesus’ life...Not clearly “seeing Jesus” = ???
- What happens if I LOOK for His power/His character amidst my everydayness?

Prophecy	Old Testament Prediction	New Testament Fulfillment
The Messiah would be the seed of a woman.	Gen. 3:15	Gal. 4:4
The Messiah would be a descendant of Abraham.	Gen. 12:3	Matt. 1:1
The Messiah would be a descendant of Isaac.	Gen. 17:19	Luke 3:34
The Messiah would be a descendant of Jacob.	Num. 24:17	Matt. 1:2; 2:2
The Messiah would be from the tribe of Judah.	Gen. 49:10	Luke 3:33
The Messiah would be an heir to the throne of David.	Is. 9:7	Luke 1:32, 33
The Messiah would be anointed and eternal.	Ps. 45:6, 7; 102:25–27	Heb. 1:8–12
The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.	Mic. 5:2	Luke 2:4, 5, 7
The Messiah would be born of a virgin.	Is. 7:14	Luke 1:26, 27, 30, 31
The Messiah's birth would trigger a	Jer. 31:15	Matt. 2:16–18

II. The Extraordinary Ministry of Christ

III. The Genealogies & Opening Chapter(s)

IV. The Prophecies of Jesus' Birth

Am I going to echo this “not seeing Jesus for who He is” relationship that was prominent in the early life of the Disciples?

OR

I am looking for the power of the Christ and the character of Christ that is seen in the Passion Narratives and trying to figure out HOW TO respond to what I discover?

QUESTIONS:

- Not clearly “seeing Jesus” = Because I do not know Him well enough?
- WHERE do I look for His power?
- WHERE do I see His character?
- Am I settled in my experience with Him thinking **I know** when/where I will see Him?
- Do I ever just turn my head away and not want to look for Him?
- Do I scratch my head like the Disciples did during Jesus' life...Not clearly “seeing Jesus” = ???
- What happens if I LOOK for His power/His character amidst my everydayness?

Matthew 7:7

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”