

Comparison of
Infancy
Narratives:
Matthew and
Luke

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Argument

- The infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke paint Jesus in different ways for separate audiences
 - Matthew- audience familiar with Hebrew Bible
 - Luke- audience less familiar with Hebrew Bible, gentile
- While they tell the same story, each author makes distinct narrative choices that portray Jesus as both a powerful Messiah (Matt.) and a humble son of God (Luke)



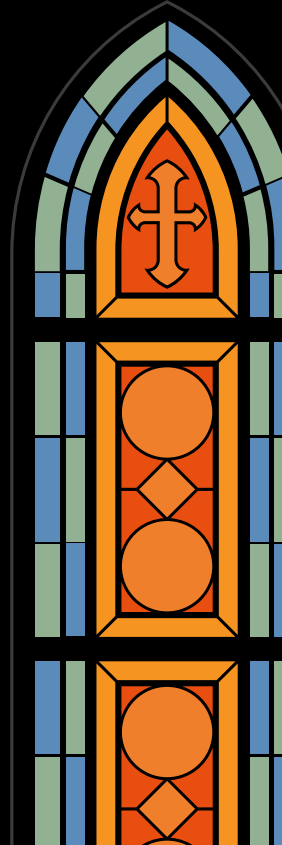
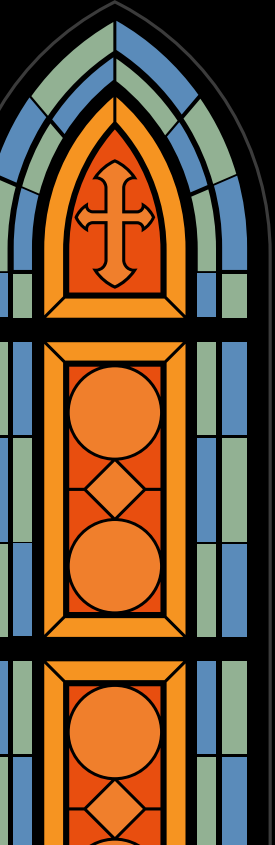
Openings

Matthew

- “An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt.1:1)
- Followed by genealogical evidence linking Jesus to Abraham and King David
- Quickly establishes Jesus’s place and as a threat to King Hosea’s rule
- Catered to those familiar with Hebrew Bible

Luke

- “I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed” (Luke 1:3-4)
- Followed by conception and birth of John the Baptist
- Assertion of truth and trustworthiness
- Implies unfamiliar audience



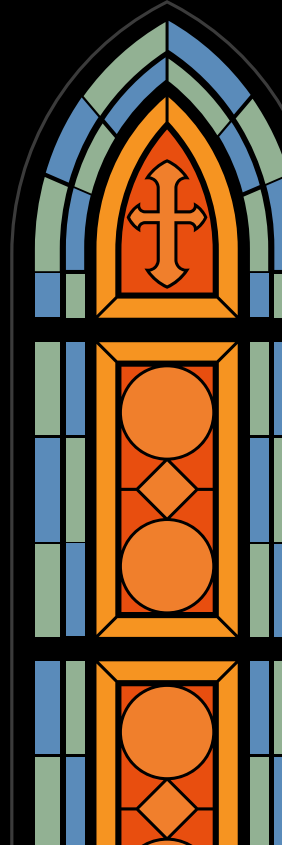
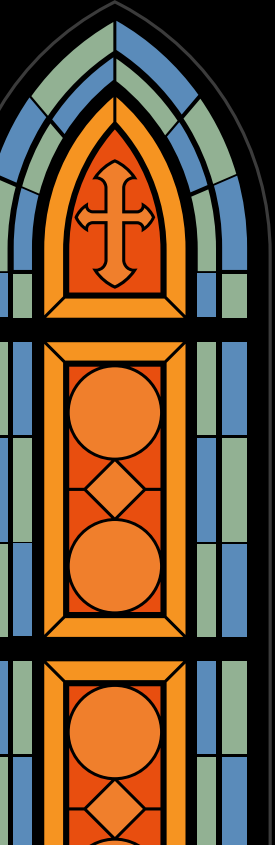
Birth of Jesus

Matthew

- “She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins,”
(Matt.1:21)
- “fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet”
(Matt.1:23)
- Assertion of prophecy fulfillment and of power

Luke

- “And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn”
(Luke 2:7)
- Humbling word choice
- Reminder of story, not included in Matt.



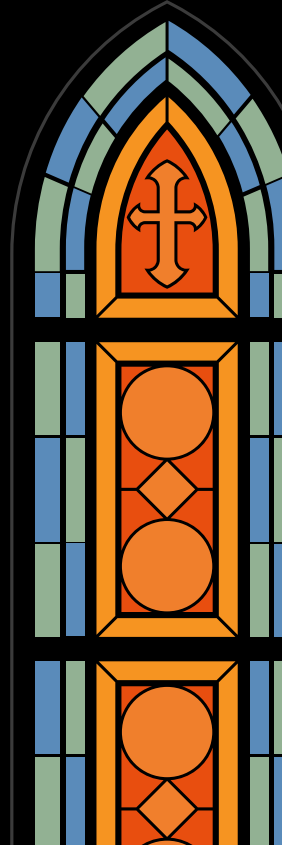
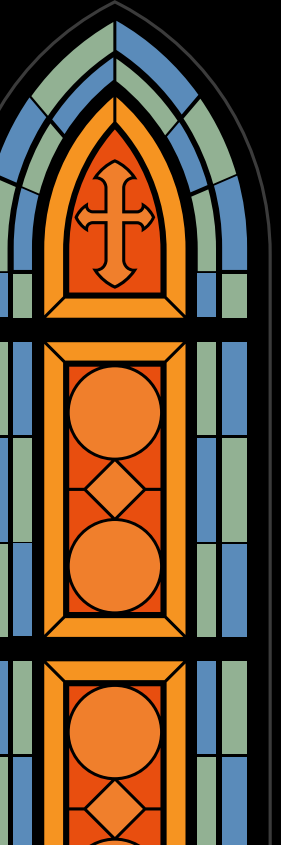
Adolescence and Baptism

Matthew

- “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness”
(Matt.3:15)
- Fulfillment
- **NOTE: Both contain the same speech from John the Baptist**

Luke

- “[Jesus] went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and favor and in years, and in divine and human favor”
(Luke 2:51-52)
- Paints him as earning and deserving of the favors bestowed on him



Conclusion

- ❑ Gospels of Matthew and Luke take different approaches to the story of Jesus's origin, yet they accomplish the same goal for their intended audiences
- ❑ Both accomplish establishing Jesus as the son of God
- ❑ Matthew's narrative lends itself to a primarily Jewish audience who would be familiar with the prophecies and stories of the Hebrew Bible
- ❑ With an audience of those who know the general information, the narrative can be assertive with the claims to Jesus's power and purpose of fulfilling prophecy
- ❑ Luke's narrative presents Jesus as a humble man deserving of his favors to be more palatable to a gentile audience
- ❑ An audience unfamiliar with the Hebrew Bible would need a narrative like Luke's

