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“In the Beginning”

The four Gospel accounts record for us the events in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel according to Mark begins with the ministry of John the Baptist and gives no detail of Jesus’ birth. The Gospel accounts of both Matthew and Luke provide details not only of Christ’s birth but also the many events before and after the Savior’s birth. The Gospel of John tells all who read it the blessed and everlasting significance of the Christmas Story, because he starts “in the beginning.”

The Book of Genesis begins with the words “In the beginning.” Significantly, John opens with those same words (Greek *en arche*; John 1:1). The beginning spoken of in Genesis is the creation of the universe and the beginning of time as we know it. God is already in existence in the beginning, as He is everlasting (Gen. 21:33; Ps. 90:1-2; Isa. 40:28; Mic. 5:2; Rom. 16:26; 2Pet. 1:11). The Christmas story begins in the eternal counsel of the Godhead (Eph. 1:4-5). The Word (Greek *logos*) already **was** God **in the beginning**. The word is the second Person of the Triune God, who takes on human flesh and becomes a man (John 1:14; Phil. 2:5-11)! The Old Testament agrees He **is God** (Isa. 9:6; Mic. 5:2). John’s Gospel emphasizes the Deity of Jesus Christ to combat heretical teaching denying it (John 5:18).

The Gospel of Matthew begins with the genealogy of Christ from Abraham. It is the genealogy of Joseph, Jesus’ step father but his legal father. This is necessary to establish Christ’s right to the throne of David the King. Matthew records the visitation of the angel of the Lord to Joseph, informing him of the miraculous conception (Matt. 1:18-20). This is vital as fulfillment of prophecy (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:21-23), but also to show that Jesus had no sinful nature, because it is passed from the male, beginning with Adam (Rom. 5:12-19). Jesus, conceived by the Holy Spirit, was sinless. We also find the visit of the wise men and Herod’s attack on Jesus (Matt. 2).

The Gospel of Luke gives the most details of the birth of Jesus and alone records the story of the visitation of the angel Gabriel to Zacharias, Elizabeth and Mary (Luke 1). Luke records the decree of Augustus, travel to Bethlehem, the birth in a manger, and the angelic worship and announcement to the shepherds (Luke 2:1-20). The genealogy (Luke 3:23-38) is that of Mary, establishing the important fact that Jesus was truly a man. This was to combat the heresy of Gnosticism (1John 1:22, 4:1-3).