

8.10

Two Christmas Stories: Similarities and Differences

Similarities		
Jesus is born in Bethlehem during the days of Herod but spends his youth in Nazareth.	Matt. 2:1, 5–6, 23	Luke 2:4–6, 11, 15, 39
Jesus belongs to the family of David.	Matt. 1:1, 6	Luke 2:4; 3:31
Mary is the mother of Jesus, and Joseph is his legal father.	Matt. 1:16–21, 25	Luke 1:35; 2:16, 41, 48
Jesus is born from a miraculous virginal conception announced in advance by an angel.	Matt. 1:18–25	Luke 1:26–38
The name “Jesus” is chosen by God.	Matt. 1:21	Luke 1:31
The family of Jesus must undertake difficult travel due to oppressive political rule.	Matt. 2:7–8, 12–18	Luke 2:1–7
Jesus’s birth is presented as the fulfillment of scriptural promises to Israel.	Matt. 1:22–23; 2:5–6	Luke 1:54–55
Even at birth, Jesus is rejected by some and inspires worship in others.	Matt. 2:10–11, 16–18	Luke 2:7, 20

Differences	
Matthew explains why the family must move from Bethlehem to Nazareth.	Matt. 2:13, 19–23
Luke explains why they must travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem.	Luke 2:2–5
In Matthew, the genealogy of Jesus runs from Abraham to Jesus.	Matt. 1:1–16
In Luke, the genealogy runs in the opposite direction, from Jesus to Adam.	Luke 3:23–38
In Matthew, Joseph is the central character of the story.	Matt. 1:18–25
In Luke, the central character is Mary.	Luke 1:26–56
In Matthew, the angel comes to Joseph to announce the virginal conception.	Matt. 1:20–21
In Luke, this angelic announcement is made to Mary.	Luke 1:26–38

In Matthew, Jesus is given an additional name, "Immanuel."	Matt. 1:23
In Luke, Jesus is given an additional name (or title), "Son of the Most High God."	Luke 1:32
In Matthew, the family of Jesus must flee the wrath of King Herod.	Matt. 2:13–22
In Luke, Caesar Augustus is responsible for the family's burdensome travel.	Luke 2:1–5
In Matthew, the events are said to fulfill quotations from the Old Testament that are cited directly.	Matt. 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23
In Luke, Old Testament Scriptures provide the background for various hymns and canticles.	Luke 1:46–55, 68–79; 2:14, 29–32
In Matthew, the birth of Jesus is noticed by the powerful and the wealthy, who respond with either worship or fear.	Matt. 2:1–12
In Luke, the birth is revealed to peasants who respond with both fear and worship.	Luke 2:8–20