

Year 6: What do the gospels tell us about the birth of Jesus?

What do the gospels tell us about Jesus?

Matthew and Luke recorded their differing versions of the birth stories in order to teach followers specific but differing things about the importance of Jesus.

These stories help Christians today in their belief about the importance of Jesus.

- Luke is showing that Jesus was a friend to the poor and was for everyone.
- Matthew was writing to show that Jesus fulfilled Jewish prophecy and that there would be a saviour who would be King.



We have four gospels because during the early church period, four people found it necessary to tell the story of Jesus from four different perspectives. Each gospel was written for a different group of people, by a different author, who was trying to accomplish a different purpose.

These are the only two gospels which include the birth of Jesus:

- Matthew 1 v18–2 v15
- Luke 2 v1-20

Matthew	Luke
διὸν δὲ πολλοὺς τῶν φαρισαίων καὶ σαδδουκαίων ἐρχομένους ἐπὶ τὸ βάπτισμα αὐτοῦ ἐπέειπεν αὐτοῖς γεννητὰ ἐχθρῶν τις ὑπεδεῖξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς ποιήσατε οὖν καρποὺς ἀγαθοῦς τῆς μετανόας καὶ μὴ δοῦναι λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν οὐ δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν λίθων τοῦτων εὐρεῖν τέκνα τῶ Ἀβραάμ ἤδη δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν ρίζαν τῶν δένδρων κείται παν οὖν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκοπτεται καὶ εἰς πυρὶ βαλλεται	ἔλεγεν οὖν τοῖς βαπτισθῆναι ὑπὸ αὐτοῦ γεννητὰ ἐχθρῶν τις ὑπεδεῖξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς ποιήσατε οὖν καρποὺς ἀγαθοῦς τῆς μετανόας καὶ μὴ ἀρήραθε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν οὐ δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν λίθων τοῦτων εὐρεῖν τέκνα τῶ Ἀβραάμ ἤδη δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν ρίζαν τῶν δένδρων κείται παν οὖν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκοπτεται καὶ εἰς πυρὶ βαλλεται

How are the gospel stories different?

- Both versions have some similarities.
- Both have Jesus born in Bethlehem to Mary and Joseph.
- Matthew's version has the visit of the Wise Men and the gifts.
- Luke's version has the visit of the angels and the shepherds.

What is the truth?

Whilst some Christians will say the nativity stories are historically accurate, other Christians will say they are not historically true but do contain very important truths — that Jesus is special, is from God, is the Saviour of all. The birth stories are stories to help illustrate these ideas so that we can understand difficult areas about God.

Vocabulary

Biblical accounts	Stories from the Bible.
gospels	The teaching in the first four books of the New Testament.
intentions	A person's plans.
interpretation	An explanation for something (there might be more than one!).
nativity	The birth of Jesus Christ.
truth	A fact or belief that is accepted as true.

Take time to reflect



Who do you think is telling the truth?
Is it Matthew or Luke?