Luke 2:1-21
About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people to be listed in record books. These first records were made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.
Everyone had to go to their own hometown to be listed. So Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to Bethlehem in Judea. Long ago Bethlehem had been King David’s hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David’s family.
Mary was engaged to Joseph and traveled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby, and while they were there, she gave birth to her first-born son. She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him on a bed of hay, because there was no room for them in the inn.
That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord’s glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. This very day in King David’s hometown a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay.” Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. They said: “Praise God in heaven! Peace on earth to everyone who pleases God.”

Davidic descent in Matthew comes, not through natural paternity, but through legal paternity. Joseph, in exercising the father’s right to name the child, becomes the legal father, the legitimate father, according to Jewish law. Both Mary and Joseph have their role to play. Through Joseph, Jesus is of Davidic descent. Through Mary, he is begotten as Son of God.

Luke portrays John the Baptist as an ascetic, a Nazarene from his infancy. The reason for introducing John is to provide a contrast with Jesus, not only to provide background for the ministry of Jesus.

Matthew’s intent in his genealogy (1:1-17) was to point to Jesus as the son of Abraham but especially to demonstrate that he was of David. Jesus was not only of Abraham but also of David through Joseph, though Joseph is not the biological father of Jesus. Luke’s genealogy goes back to Adam, but his genealogy serves a different purpose. It lies outside his infancy narrative and intends
After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about.” They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay.

When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him. Everyone listened and was surprised. But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant.

As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

Eight days later Jesus’ parents did for him what the Law of Moses commands. And they named him Jesus, just as the angel had told Mary when he promised she would have a baby.

Matthew 1: 18-24
This is how Jesus Christ was born. A young woman named Mary was engaged to Joseph from King David’s family. But before they were married, she learned that she was going to have a baby by God’s Holy Spirit.

Joseph was a good man and did not want to embarrass Mary in front of everyone. So he decided to quietly call off the wedding.

While Joseph was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel said, “Joseph, the baby that Mary will have is from the Holy Spirit. Go ahead and marry her. Then after her baby is born, name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

So the Lord’s promise came true, just as the prophet had said, “A virgin will have a baby boy, and he will be called Immanuel,” which means “God is with us.”

After Joseph woke up, he and Mary were soon married, just as the Lord’s angel had told him to do. But they did not sleep together before her baby was born. Then Joseph named him Jesus.

to show that Jesus is Son of God. There are not only differences but disagreements between Matthew’s and Luke’s genealogies.

For Matthew, Jesus seems to have been born in Bethlehem because that was where his parents lived. There is no journey to Bethlehem as in Luke. For Matthew the problem is to get Jesus to Nazareth, which he accomplishes by the flight to Egypt. The flight into Egypt further identifies Jesus with the history of the Jews and at the same time has a mission to the Gentiles.

For Luke the problem is to get Jesus to Bethlehem. Both Raymond Brown and Joseph Fitzmyer reject the historicity of Luke’s census. Quirinius was legate in Syria not Galilee, ten years after the death of Herod the Great. Luke was able to use the census to explain Joseph and Mary’s presence in Bethlehem since Luke assumed that Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth before Jesus was born.

In Luke’s narrative, Mary and Joseph are Galileans who travel to Bethlehem of Judah because of Roman census. The newborn Jesus is placed in a manger. They return home to Nazareth afterwards, seemingly stopping at the Temple in Jerusalem on their way. In Matthew, Joseph and Mary are introduced as natives of Bethlehem, where they reside in a house. After fleeing to Egypt to escape the murderous designs of Herod the Great, they relocate to Galilee.

The Evangelist Luke repeatedly compares Jesus with John the Baptist, who is not mentioned at all in Matthew’s infancy account. In Matthew’s narrative, Jesus birth is detected by foreign priests, the magi; in Luke it is lowly Jewish shepherds who first learn the news.

In Matthew’s narrative the spotlight shines on Joseph. It is e who receives divine guidance in a series of dreams. In Luke’s account it is Mary who shines, portrayed as the one who hears and keeps God’s word.

Luke portrays Jesus’ family observantly going to Jerusalem, but in Matthew they avoid the city.
THE WORLD IN FRONT OF THE TEXT

Scholars have asked – whatever their origin or historical accuracy, why were these stories included by Matthew and Luke in their gospels? How do the infancy narratives convey the good news of salvation, so that they are truly and literally “gospel”? Why were these stories thought appropriate by Matthew and Luke to be included in their Gospels? Why did Matthew and Luke move the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ from the baptism back to his birth and conception? The answer lies in the importance that they saw in the conception and birth as showing who Jesus was. For them not the baptism but the conception (Luke) and birth (Matthew) was the moment when God revealed who Jesus was.

References


The Infancy Narratives. http://opcentral.org/resources/2014/09/05/the-infancy-narratives/

Introduction to the Two Infancy Narratives http://www.bc.edu/schools/stm/crossroads/resources/birthofjesus/intro/introduction_to_thetwoinfancy Narratives.html