

Jesus' Biblical Birth Stories: as told in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.- A side by side comparison.

Might there be discrepancies and outright contradiction between the two famous birth stories of Jesus as told in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke? I attended a presentation on this theme. The speaker passed out outlines listing specific points of difference. Both Gospels were then read. As we followed her outline it became clearly evident the author had some good points.

The question is: Are differences found in the stories of the birth of Jesus, as told by Matthew and Luke, cause for concern of accuracy, providing a case for contradiction between the Gospels, or do they simply reflect a different emphasis and style between authors telling the same story?

In this search for answers I have attempted to use resources from both Christian sourced and independent evidence. Although the Christian based explanations are sometimes convincing, much of their reasoning reflects a consummate need to support Biblical inerrancy. This agenda assumes vital importance as an assumption of faith and therefore must be upheld at all costs, thereby inserting a strong bias into much Christian based thinking.

Thus, the slippery slope of overriding personal issues resulting from lifelong conditioned acceptance practices (determined by the society in which you live) can have a profound effect on how different, even contradictory, conclusions can be drawn from the same original evidence.

The search here is for objective truth and answers freed of any fundamental pressing need to fit findings into dogmatic ideas of anyone; whether they are from church, clergy, society or the common man.

Where possible archeological artifacts and historical records, independent of any tradition or related mythological story telling, were given top priority. Stories, as told by and passed down through the centuries by people likely to have enhanced events for increased entertainment value, were deemed of secondary value. Indeed, through the telling and retelling of such stories, changes and mistakes are liable to be added as they are passed from one story teller to another and from one generation to the next.

All Biblical Scripture excerpts are taken from the New International Version (NIV). Locations of passage chapter and verse are highlighted in bold black offering easy location for study and comparison with other translations. Full texts are presented below.

Here is a list of differences between the two Gospels as presented by the speaker noted above.

1. Pregnancy appearance of angel:

In Matthew: Appears to Joseph during pregnancy to tell him not to worry about the baby being his.

In Luke: Appears to Mary before the pregnancy to tell her she will become pregnant by the power of God.

2. Name of child:

In Matthew: Jesus, Emmanuel

In Luke: Jesus.

3. Date of birth:

In Matthew: 4 BC: Jesus' birth occurred during King Herod's time. Herod dies in 4 BC so it could be a few months before his death, but no later than this time frame.

In Luke: 6 AD: Quirinius did not become the governor of Syria until the year 6 AD so it could not have been before then.

4. Home town:

In Matthew: Bethlehem

In Luke: Nazareth:

5. Birth:

In Matthew: Birth takes place; presumably at the home of Joseph to whom she was engaged.

In Luke: In a manger in Bethlehem where they are visiting for the census.

6. Adoration:

In Matthew: Wise men (astrologers) follow the star until it stops. (stars top? Wouldn't it fall?) Bring him gifts and worship him.

In Luke: Shepherds who were watching their flocks by night (likely in the Spring of the year) came to worship him. They have been told of the birth by a multitude of angels on a hillside.

7. Action of parents following birth:

Matthew: Flee from Bethlehem to Egypt because they fear Herod will try to kill the baby. (This is remarkable like the Moses story in Exodus.) Historical records of Herod's reign never mention anything about killing babies. National Geographic (Dec 2008) reporting new archeological evidence says they are almost certain this did not happen.

In Luke: They stay in Bethlehem where he is circumcised on the 8th day. They also stay in that town for another 30 days to present him at the temple after the Purification.

8. Jesus' growing years:

In Matthew: Angels appear to Joseph in a dream and he follows their instructions. The parents return from Egypt, but do not go to their old hometown because they are afraid of Herod's son. They move to a new town- Nazareth.

In Luke: After completing the Jewish laws of requirement, the parents return to Nazareth because it is their home.

We will carefully look at each concern and attempt to ascertain the import of each claim. As we look, more questions and issues may be uncovered while others already listed here are possibly dismissed and laid to rest. Again, there is no faith structured bias or belief system demanding acceptance or rejection of evidence; ideas or findings that may or may not "fit" into a certain beloved church teaching. The focus should ever be on the pinnacle of truth, cleansed from the beclouded pitfalls of passion, desire, hope or satisfaction; where preconceived notion may not muddy the outcome, where we do not slide down the slippery slope and descend ever farther from the clear bright pinnacle of truth.

Let us then proceed on with an open mind and see what might be found. (Number headings below refer to statements made by the speaker above.)

[1]: Pregnancy appearance of angel.

Sometimes, people may claim a discrepancy based on an angel appearing to Mary in Luke verses an angel appearing to Joseph in Matthew telling the good news of Mary's giving birth. Yet, the angel appears to Mary announcing the glad tidings before she becomes pregnant and to Joseph comes to Joseph after he finds Mary pregnant and questions whether he should marry her.

Luke 1:26... God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 1:27: to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendent of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 1:28: The angel went to her and said," Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." 1:29: Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 1:30: But the angel said to her," Do not be afraid Mary, you have found favor with God. . You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

Matthew 1:18: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. 1:19: Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. 1:20: But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said," Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

Verdict: No Discrepancy for the angel appearance, just two aspects of the tale told by different authors.

This is all well and good for the angel appearances. But, a Christian friend, who was also critically examining the scriptures with me, uncovered another contradiction. This is a perfect case where one might look and study for years (as he did) and yet miss it. Look carefully again at the Luke and Matthew scriptures. In Luke, Joseph is pledged to be married; in Matthew; “Mary is also pledged to be married to Joseph, her husband, but in the very next line; Joseph is already labeled “her husband” and is considering a divorce. The angel continues saying,” **do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife**, (See complete underlined texts above.)

Verdict: A translation error? Obviously Joseph cannot be both betrothed and husband to the same woman at the same time as is stated within two lines of the same source!

[2] Town of Jesus’ birth:

Matthew 2:1: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod...

Luke: 2:4: So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

2:5: He went there to register with Mary who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. **2:6:** While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her first born, a son.

In both accounts, Jesus was actually born in Bethlehem, regardless of what town the angel appeared to Joseph and Mary.

Verdict: No discrepancy on the town of Jesus’ birth but, as for his home village, no mention is made of a trip from Nazareth in Matthew. The story could well begin after Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem for the census but this is not possible due to the chronology between Herod the Great, Archelaus and Quirinius: see “Date of Birth” below.

[3] Date of Birth:

Matthew 2:20: But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee

Luke 2:1: (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. A Christian argument claims Luke is referring to a different earlier census officiated by Quirinius but Luke seems to make it clear Quirinius was Governor of Syria. A first census during his governorship could not happen before 6AD.

Verdict: Historically, Herod the Great dies and his son, Archelaus, inherits the throne in The Matthew version had to happen in 4 BC. Luke makes it clear Jesus was born while the parents were in Bethlehem to register for the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. Historically, Quirinius was appointed

governor of Syria in 6 AD. There is at least a ten year discrepancy as to when Jesus was born.

Another major chronological problem presents itself.

In Matthew: Jesus is born in 4BC during the time of Herod. (see Matthew 2:20:) The baby is visited by three Zoroastrian wise men traveling a long distance from Persia who find Jesus , presumably a toddler, in a house with his mother. **“ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him.”** Also, Herod orders the killing of all boy babies two years of age and under.

In Luke:

The birth of Jesus appears on a timeline at least ten years later as Quirinius was appointed Governor of Syria on that year.

Yet, Jesus is visited by shepherds coming directly into the town of Bethlehem where they find a new born infant lying in a manger.

Verdict: It makes no sense for Jesus, in Matthew, to be a toddler of around two years of age in the year 4 BC and yet, in Luke, be a new born baby in the year 6 AD. This is a glaring discrepancy!

[6] Adoration events after birth:

Matthew: 2:9: After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 2:10: When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 2:11: On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

Luke: 2:8: And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 2:9: An angel of the Lord appeared to them... 2:15: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." 2:16: So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 2:17: When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 2:18: and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 2:19: But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 2:20: The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen which was just as they were told.

Verdict: No real contradiction:

This is another case where differences in a story as told by separate sources do not constitute a problem in contradiction. The “spring verses fall” possibility (a concern for the speaker’s outline above) is of little importance. The wise men’s visit to Jesus occurred well over a year after Jesus’ birth, they traveled a long distance from Persia and found a child with his mother. The shepherds simply walked down

a hill (probably in spring as they were engaged in the springtime activity of watching their flocks by night) into Bethlehem. They found a newborn baby in a manger.

As for “Stars falling” This comment (see above) is a little harsh and seems to be a case of a healthy skepticism of the “speaker” (again see above) showing itself. A star standing still could be the result of a planet, such as Jupiter exhibiting retrograde motion in its orbit in relation to the Earth. Also, remember you are dealing with ancient astrological signs and meanings. Ways of thinking were very different two thousand years ago than in today’s Westernized modern world.

[7] Action of parents following birth:

Matthew: 2:16: When Herod realized he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under... Here is the passage from Matthew chronicling the escape to Egypt. Matthew 2:13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “ take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.

Luke 2:15: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “ Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” 2:16: So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

Luke 2:23 On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived. (Luke’s Gospel as paraphrased continues) Then Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord and offer sacrifice in keeping with what is said in Jewish Law.

Luke 2:39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

Verdict: The stories here are quite different and present contradictions:

As seen in the examples above, Matthew makes a central point of the escape to Egypt thus saving the infant from Herod’s “massacre of the Innocents” yet, Luke gives no hint of Herod’s actions nor is there any alarm. The family of Jesus simply and peacefully fulfills the Jewish law of the time

As for Herod ordering the killing of male children, there have been major recent discoveries about Herod the Great. Excavations have been carried out and his tomb has been unearthed. Herod was perhaps a casualty of Biblical/Jewish history.

1. After all, the Bible owes much of its world outlook to ancient Sumerian, Israeli and Jewish viewpoints. Rome was seen as a long term oppressor of the Jews and the Jewish sect of early Christianity. Herod may well have been politically vilified and compared with the Egyptian Pharaoh of Exodus. **Exodus 1:22: Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people:” Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live. See Exodus 1:15:22: lower on page) Of course, it is possible**

Herod ordered a massacre of children but recent archeological evidence does not support this. (link to “Herod #1.)

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/12/herod/mueller-text>

Further research brings to light another consideration. Perhaps the reported infanticide in Matthew is a retelling of the more ancient story of the birth of Lord Krishna. Matthew may have embellished the Jesus story to give it more credence in the mind of the listener. At any rate the similarities are striking. Remember, Mithraism, a sect of Hinduism, was an accepted form of worship among the ancient Romans so the Hindu based legends would have been well known to the Gospel writers.

“As legend says, Krishna’s parents, Devaki and Vasudeva, had already been in the dungeon of the tyrannical king Kamsa for several years when Krishna was born. Kamsa was holding them captive because of a prophecy that warned him that the eighth child of his cousin Devaki would destroy him. Just like Herod, who was desperately trying to kill Jesus because he had been told that Jesus was to be the king of the Jews, Kamsa, too, committed the crime of infanticide, killing all of Devaki’s children as soon as they were born.” For more on possible connections between Christ and Krishna check out:

http://hindu-culture.suite101.com/article.cfm/christ_and_krishna

and http://hinduism.about.com/od/lordkrishna/a/christ_krishna.htm

[8] Jesus’ growing years:

.Matthew: 2:19 “The Return to Nazareth” After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt 2:20: and said,” Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who are trying to take the child’s life are dead.” 2:21: So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. 2:22: But when he heard that [Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, 2:23: and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: He will be called a Nazarene.”

Luke 2:39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

Verdict: There are real contradictory differences here. Matthew portrays a scene of fear from persecution as the family flees to Nazareth instead of Israel (Bethlehem) which was their original home.

Luke tells a peaceful story wherein the family simply returns to Nazareth, after observing the Jewish festivities in Jerusalem, as Nazareth is their own town. Also Matthew has the family moving to Nazareth finding safety from Herod. Luke has them “return to Galilee to their home town of Nazareth”.

In conclusion: All I can say is I have searched and found. I leave it to the seeker of truth to draw their own conclusions of faith.

Yet...Perhaps we should drop the “inerrant Bible” factor from the equation of faith. Perchance, by doing so, wider doors to greater understanding will be open. Maybe we should be focusing on the inner truths as taught by the Great Teacher Himself rather than rely on church ordained authority dictating the answers to us. The inner embracing light of love and peace through love of God lifts one up into the realms of unity and oneness with all beings. Surely, if we were to truly follow the path Christ broke for us as He sacrificed his life to the Will of the Father, The world would surely be transformed into “God’s Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven. World peace and goodness would follow all the days of our lives!

After all this is said and done concerning the Christmas story one must ask: Just how important is this when compared to the supreme message of the Christ? The Nativity story, so immensely popularized by Christmas celebrations, is not even mentioned in Mark or John. Mark begins his Gospel with the beginning of Jesus, ministry as an adult when he is baptized by John the Baptist. John begins his Gospel by proclaiming the spiritual station of Jesus.

Below are the entire two Christmas stories as told by Matthew and Luke and the account in Exodus of the Pharaoh killing male babies.

Matthew 1:18: “This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. 1:19: Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. 1:20: But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,” Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 1:21: She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

1:22: All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 1:23: ”The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel – which means,” God with us.”

1:24: When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 1:25: But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son, And he gave him the name Jesus.

Matthew 2:1: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2:2 and asked,” Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.

2:3: When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. **2:4:** When he has called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. **2:5:** " In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied," for this is what the prophet has written: **2:6:** 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'

2:7: Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. **2:8:** He sent them to Bethlehem and said," Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

2:9: After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. **2:10:** When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. **2:11:** On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. **2:12:** And, having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Matthew 2:13 "The Escape to Egypt" When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said," take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him. **2:14:** So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, **2:15:** where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so it was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet:" Out of Egypt I called my son."

2:16: When Herod realized he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance of the time he had learned from the Magi. **2:17:** Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled...

Matthew: 2:19 "The Return to Nazareth" After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt **2:20:** and said," Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who are trying to take the child's life are dead." **2:21:** So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. **2:22:** But when he heard that [Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, **2:23:** and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: He will be called a Nazarene."

Luke: 1:26 ...God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, **1:27:** to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendent of David. The

virgin's name was Mary. 1:28: The angel went to her and said," Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." 1:29: Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 1:30: But the angel said to her," Do not be afraid Mary, you have found favor with God. 1:31: You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 1:32: He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 1:33: and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.1:34: "How will this be," Mary asks the angel," since I am a virgin?"1:35: The angel answered," The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ...1:38 "I am the Lord's servant", Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said," Then the angel left her.

Luke 2:1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2:2: (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 2:3: And everyone went to his own town to register. 2:4: So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 2:5: He went there to register with Mary who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

2:6: While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 2:7: and she gave birth to her first born, a son. She wrapped him in clothes and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them at the inn.

2:8: And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 2:9: An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 2:10: But the angel said to them," Do not be afraid. I bring you news of great joy that will be for all the people. 2:11: Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. 2:12: This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in clothes and lying in a manger...

2:15: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another," Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." 2:16: So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 2:17: When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 2:18: and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 2:19: But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

2:20: The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen which was just as they were told.

Luke 2:23 On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived.

(Luke's Gospel continues araphrased) Then Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord and offer sacrifice in keeping with what is said in Jewish Law.

Luke 2:39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

Exodus 1:15:22: The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives," When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live."1:17: The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt told them to do; they let the boys live. 1:18: Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them," Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?" 1:19: The midwives answered," Pharaoh, Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive. 1:20: So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. 1:21: And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own, 1:22: Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people:" Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.

One final question for thought: How could the human form of Jesus be a product of "immaculate conception" when it is clear both Joseph and Jesus are of the same lineage of David? Joseph must be Jesus' biological father for this to be the case. Many scholars believe the term "virgin" could also mean in translation, simply a young woman who has not had a child. Perhaps Jewish law bequeathed the lineage of David upon Jesus anyway; not recognizing a biological father but simply observing the outcome of a legal marriage?

Sources used for this study include:

1. Herod #1 <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/12/herod/mueller-text>
2. A Christian scholar explains Quirinius 6AD census anomaly and lack of historical evidence of Herod killing 2 year old boys. http://www.comereason.org/bibl_cntr/con100.asp
3. Discrepancy of Herod's death in 4BC and Quirinius census in 6AD <http://www.spiritrestoration.org/Church/Research%20History%20and%20Great%20Links/New%20Testament%20Timeline.htm>
4. The [Gospel of Luke](#) links the [birth](#) of [Jesus](#) to a "world-wide" census ordered by Augustus carried out while Quirinius was governor of Syria; however, Luke also, like the [Gospel of Matthew](#) dates the birth to the reign of [Herod the Great](#), who died nearly ten years before the census of 6 or 7 AD. [Raymond E. Brown](#) points out that most modern historians acknowledge that Luke's account is mistaken. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quirinius>
5. Census of Quirinius http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Census_of_Quirinius
6. There are many similarities between traditional orthodox Christian teachings and legends and practices surrounding the followers of Mithra. Even the date of Christmas is the same date as Mithra was born. <http://nephiliman.com/mithra.htm>

