

## Observations about Each Gospel's Introduction of Jesus

### Matthew

Matthew begins with a genealogy of Jesus that starts with David. Jesus then makes his first appearance in the story in the following passage:

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do 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 as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus. ([Matthew 1:18-25 NRSV](#))

### Luke

Luke also tells the story of Jesus's birth, providing even more details than Matthew. He includes a genealogy that goes back to Adam, along with the foretelling of the John the Baptist and Jesus, the encounter between Mary and Elizabeth, Mary's song of praise, Zechariah's prophecy, and the visit from the shepherds. All of this takes place before Jesus is named and presented at the temple, which can be found in Luke 2:21:

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. ([Luke 2:21 NRSV](#))

### John

John, which was written at a later date, breaks the mold and begins his gospel with a poetic introduction of Jesus. In this beautiful chapter, he goes beyond the earthly birth of Jesus by saying that he has existed from the beginning of creation.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. ([John 1:1-18 NRSV](#))

## **Mark**

Now, let us take a look at how Mark begins his gospel. The Gospel of Mark, unlike the other accounts, does not seem concerned with the beginning of Jesus's earthly life or existence, but the beginning of his ministry. It begins with John the Baptist preparing the way and then baptizing Jesus. It states:

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." ([Mark 1:9-11 NRSV](#))