

## ***“Christ’s Family Tree”***

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (*And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.*) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)

Decrees and registrations and taxation – it sounds familiar – and it reminds us Joseph and Mary are part of a world that is on the move. They live within history – where God is at work, in His own unique ways – as He always has, according to His promises. Joseph and Mary are part of God’s plan.

So, Joseph takes Mary – and off they go to Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David which is called Bethlehem – “because he was of the house and lineage of David.” David was Joseph’s relative. You have to go a way back up the family tree – but there he is, King David – the one to whom the Lord promised a Son, who would sit upon his throne, and whose reign would be without end.

Many of you have relatives here tonight – Grandpa and Grandma, and others who are part of your family tree. That’s one of the wonderful things about Christmas – families getting together – younger generations and older generations – all one, big, happy family.

Except, if we’re honest, we must say that it’s not always a happy family – and Christmas is not a joyous time for everyone. Our families show our scars, and the wounds are often fresh. You might be getting together with your family for Christmas – but that may mean being with your cousin who always makes fun of you.

Regardless of what your family is like – we are all part of one, big family. As the children said so wonderfully tonight – we are all members of Adam’s family. He is the father of us all – and we are like him in many ways – but one way sticks out – we are sinners, just like he was. That’s one thing that all his descendants have inherited from him – sin, and with that comes death.

That’s why our families are suffering, and broken. That’s why your cousin can be so mean to you – and you sin, by hating him in return. But God has given a gift to Adam that is also for all of his descendants – for the whole family tree – the promise of a Savior from sin. The promise of Jesus, who takes away our sin – and in so doing – gives us life.

Tonight, the children traced Adam’s family tree – all the way down to Jesus. Along the way – many others could have been mentioned – but with each branch of the tree, we hear the promise of the Savior repeated. Now, along comes Joseph – and he’s “of the house and lineage of David.” God’s promise to King David of old, is now being fulfilled, as Joseph’s wife Mary, gives birth to a Son, the Savior, Jesus.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. (Luke 2:8-12)

Did you hear that? “Born FOR YOU” – for the children of Adam. This little baby, laid in a humble manger, wrapped in rags – is the Savior of the world. He is YOUR Savior.

God had promised to send His Son to deliver us from the darkness of our sin, to rescue us from death – and now, the Promise is fulfilled, the GIFT is given – “For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (Luke 2:13-14)

There is peace on earth, because God has come to earth – the Son of God has taken on human flesh and blood – so that all mankind might be saved through Him. That peace is for you, whose sins burden you, torment you, and frighten you.

That peace is for you and your family – for those who have sinned against you, and those whom you have hurt with your sins. Christ brings peace to you by forgiving you – so that you also might forgive others.

Christ the Savior has been born FOR YOU – to reconcile you to God – and to reconcile you to one another.

Yes, we are all children of Adam – but through faith in Jesus Christ – we are made to be children of God. Just as we inherited sin from our father Adam – so through our heavenly Father, we have inherited eternal life, through His Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Christ’s peace to you and your family – tonight, and for all eternity. Amen.