



TEEN TREE OF LIFE

What Child Is This?

Part 1

December 27, 2020

Before you begin, ask yourself a very important question: Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins? If you answered yes, you will need to be sure that you are filled with The Holy Spirit. How do you do this? You name your sins to God The Father in His Son's Name. This is called Rebound. As a Christian, you must rebound any time you sin. This is taught in 1 JOH 1:9: *If we confess [name] our sins [directly to God], He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now, if you have never believed that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins, all you have to do is say to yourself that you believe in Him and you are saved! The Bible verse which teaches us this is ACTS 16:31: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."*

*What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?
Why lies He in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear, for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.
So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh;
Come, peasant, king to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings,
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.*

These are the beautiful lyrics from the cherished 19th Century Christmas Carol written by William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898). His question – "What Child is This?" was

prompted by the events that surrounded the most important moment in the history of the world: The Birth of Jesus Christ.

There has always been a peculiarity surrounding the manger scene because it seems so out of place – so unlike what anyone would imagine as the place where Our Savior would be born. And why would a Child born in a manger and lying “*in such mean estate*” – as the songwriter described it – have shepherds watching over Him and be receiving attention from a bunch of angels??!! You would expect the child of poor parents, without any family connections to any of the important people of the time, to be born in a modest place. But this Child was born in a place where farm animals like donkeys, oxen and horses eat and sleep. And this Child was getting attention from “***the heavenly host***”!!!

Have you ever wondered what the term “***the heavenly host***” actually means? Angels are called “***the heavenly host***.” The term has a dual meaning. It means both angels and the literal stars of the universe. So, it refers to angels and the stars of the universe where they reside.

LUKE 2:13-14 mentions “***heavenly host***” with respect to those angels who accompanied the one angel who brought the good news of Our Savior’s Birth to the shepherds: ***And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”*** Now imagine what it was like in that manger to see it filled with so many angels and the sky above it full of stars! This was not an ordinary child. It was Christ, The King!

But why would the Promised Messiah, who is the Greater Son of David (and therefore the rightful King of Israel), be born in such a place? Shouldn’t such a Person be born in a palace or at least in a nice, clean home? He is of The Royal Line so why was this family so poor? And why, by this time in the history of Jesus Christ’s lineage, are the family connections so weakened that the young family is not being given any help at such a critical time? Well, the answer to that question is a matter of fulfilled prophecy. To better understand all of this, let’s look at both sides of the incongruity of the manger scene as a means to better understand the Humble Birth of a Humble Man.

To understand The Humble Birth of Jesus Christ, we must start with the history of Israel and what happened to their Royal Line of Kings. The nation of Israel was born out of God’s Promises to Abram (who would be named Abraham by God). Abram was commanded by God to leave his father Terah’s house and move to land formerly given to Canaan. God was now putting into motion a promise to give this land to Abraham and his offspring: ***The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s family. Go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. And I will bless you. I will make your name great. You will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you. I will put a curse on anyone who puts a curse on you. All nations on earth will be blessed because of you.”*** (GEN 12:1-3 New International Reader’s Version)

Obeying God's command, Abram gathered his wife Sarai (who would eventually be called Sarah by God), along with their nephew Lot, and the couple's belongings and headed off to Canaan. But because there was a harsh famine in the land of Canaan, Abram and Sarai traveled south to Egypt instead. Big mistake! With this decision, Abram took himself out of God's Plan for his life.

On the journey to Egypt, Abram told Sarai to pretend to be his sister, worrying that the Egyptians would kill him to take her for themselves: ***It came about, when he was approaching Egypt, that he said to his wife Sarai, "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well for me because of you, and that I may live on account of you."*** (GEN 12:11-13)

When summoned before the King, Sarai told the lie she had agreed to – that Abram was her brother. Big mistake! Sarai also took herself out of God's Plan for her life. Based on the lie, the King gave the couple gifts thinking that Abram was the beautiful Sarai's brother. It is probable that Sarah was also given her Egyptian servant Hagar during this stay. Eventually God afflicted the King's family with plagues and he then realized that Sarai was Abram's wife. So, he commanded them to leave Egypt.

The couple returned to Canaan and ten years later, Abram and Sarai still had no children of their own. Sarai suggested that Abram have a child with her Egyptian handmaid, Hagar and he agreed. This produced great stress between Sarai and her handmaid Hagar, as you can imagine! Out of jealousy, Sarai protested to her husband that the handmaid no longer treated her with respect. Sarai treated the pregnant Hagar so horribly that she fled from her mistress but eventually returned after angels came to her. She then gave birth to Abram's son who was named Ishmael.

This is what happened not long after: ***When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."*** Then God said to Abraham, ***"As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any***

uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant." God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." (GEN 17:1-16 New International Version)

Shortly afterward, Abraham and Sarah were visited by three men. One of them told Abraham that when he returned the next year, Sarah would indeed have gotten pregnant and have a son. Sarah overheard what was said, and she laughed to herself about the possibility of their having a child this late in their lives. But Sarah soon became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham, at the very moment which had been predicted. Abraham, then a hundred years old, named the child Isaac. Isaac would go on to become a crucial man of the Bible, fathering Jacob the eventual Patriarch of the Israelites.

{to be continued}