

## Family Tree – Manger

December 24, 2016

### Community:

1. What was the highlight of the Christmas season?
2. Was there any “family drama” that made your holiday celebration difficult? If you can, share what you had to work through and how (if it was) it was resolved?

### Core:

1. **Read: Matthew 1: 1.** As we’ve walked through the concept and understanding of who Jesus is (through His *family tree*), what did Jesus’ genealogy show to people in Jesus’ day-and-time...and what does it tell us today?
2. **Read John 3:16-17.** John 3:16 is a very familiar verse in the Bible—which *IS* the gospel—but what about verse 17? What do we learn about God in this verse?
3. God is often seen (or misinterpreted) as being harsh and judgmental. What about the Christmas story reveals how God didn’t send Jesus to condemn, but to save?
4. **Read 2 Isaiah 9:6-7.** We see portions of this biblical prophecy on Christmas cards and wrapping paper every year during the holiday season, but it was written over 700 years before Jesus’ birth. Think about that for a moment, then share your thoughts.
5. Scott Nickell pointed out that—even though we like to sentimentally focus on baby Jesus in a manger—we *have* to respond to Jesus; Jesus the man...hung on a cross for our sins. What gets in your way of Jesus at this time of year the most?
6. Throughout this series, Jim and Scott have had on the stage a fir tree (with a red ribbon)...a stump (with a green shoot)...a crossroads sign...and a hay-filled manger. Did any of these visual examples of the heart and theme of Christmas resonate with you? If so, which one?

### Challenge:

Make copies or write down the Bible verses from this message (Isaiah 9:6-7 and John 3:16-17) and tape, pin or add them to your calendar—in each quarter of the New Year (in March, June, September and December).

Then, when you reach those months, read, memorize, and meditate over those Bible verses. Write down or journal about what you think God reveals to you throughout 2017...about our Savior...born as a baby in a manger...who grew to be a man who saved us.

Happy New Year!