



Jesus' Family

Our *Today* devotions for December, written by John Van Schepen, are centered on the Advent theme of “**Jesus' Family.**”

What does your family history say about you?

I started researching my family history over a decade ago, and have been amazed and impressed at some of the stories of bravery and risk-taking. Many left home and kin to immigrate to America at a time when they had no reasonable expectation of ever seeing them again. Many endured tragic deaths of spouses and children. A few had some embarrassments they probably wish would have been lost to history. All of their stories have helped me discover how I came to be where I am now.

Maybe your family members give you a healthy sense of pride because of the positive legacy that they have left. Or perhaps you're a bit embarrassed when you think about the mistakes that your loved ones have made. Whatever the case may be, our family history does not define us, but **our stories are shaped by our family members.**

What does Jesus' family history say about him? During this Christmas month, we will be considering many biblical names. We find most of these names in the genealogies of Jesus recorded in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. We will reflect on how God used a large variety of people to carry out his great plan of salvation. Some of them served God eagerly, while others gravely disobeyed. **Whether faithful or faithless, their stories point us to Jesus.** God—in his grace and mercy—faithfully carried out his plan by sending his only Son, Jesus, to save us from sin and restore us. As we reflect

on these people in Jesus' family this month, **may we also see how God can use us to live faithfully for him each day.** What better way to prepare ourselves to celebrate Christmas?

Dr. John Van Schepen is a retired pastor who served churches in Washington, Wisconsin, Indiana, Oregon, and California. He and his wife, Willie, have been blessed with five children and eleven grandchildren. Since retirement, he has served as an interim pastor several times. The Van Schepens have also served with various organizations to train and encourage pastors and church leaders in several countries.

As you read the *Today* devotionals this month, **may you be refreshed, refocused, and renewed in God's Word!**

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