

FIRST CHRISTMAS . . .

by Jacqueline Strachan Laughlin

Matthew 1:1-17

Luke 3:23-38

Close your eyes!

Take a breath!

What is your very very first Christmas memory? I always will think of a Christmas tree brightly lit in the morning with presents all around!

Have you ever wondered what the very first Christmas was like—the one that we say we are celebrating each year? Are you awaiting that first Christmas or the one you recall in your youth or earliest memories? Or the one we heard the stories about with Mary and Joseph and manger Nativity scenes? Maybe it's a little of both!

We imagine, something magical, full of mystery, some disappointment, some disbelief, maybe even a bit of fear and trepidation. However, Advent is the formal anticipation of not really fully knowing all of the details of what will come.

Mathew and Luke take a decidedly different approach to highlighting the importance of the first Christmas. Birth is all about genealogy! Who is in this family? Who's Child is it, who is the Father, who is the SON, who are the ancestors and what might we anticipate for all the children and descendants that will come? There was a prophesy, is it true? From generation to generation, new mercies, new grace, all things are possible.

In the book I've been reading this year, *The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Birth* by theologians Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, we see very different genealogies for the same Jesus depending on who tells the story. However, the impact on me is the stunning realization that Jesus brings Joy to the world as the human embodiment of God's Light and salvation—change truly taking place within me.

There is not much mention about mothers except Mary and the conception that took place without sin. Whom gave birth to whom and under what circumstances simply traces the family line, typical of the definition of royalty, highlighting the change in whom we serve.

For sure the inheritance is to be maintained intact for all generations to come. We belong to Jesus by birth. We are born in! We are transformed mind, body and Spirit! Who begat who leads directly to us this day. We can see the fulfillment of the promise that the birth of this particular baby boy will indeed change everything from this point forward.

I so welcome this Advent season with all the joy, anticipation, mystery and thanksgiving as if it were my very very first Christmas.

Photo credits :Jordan Meadows my son sharing the children's First Christmas 2018

