



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

PARISH OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY, “EVANGELISMOS”

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SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER 2015 – THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST

EPISTLE The Reading is from St Paul’s Letter to the Hebrews

[11:9-10, 32-40] By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword of, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mocking and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a

good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

EXPLANATION: Abraham's faith was his obedience, patience and endurance. The city which he sought was one which had particular **foundations** – the city designed and **built by God**, the heavenly Jerusalem. We too live in a **“strange country”** which has no permanence, and we look forward to the eternal city – the kingdom of God. **(11:9-10)** Similarly, the saints by being loyal to God and having faith were made righteous and became heirs to the kingdom of heaven. Through their exploits and accomplishments, they performed many miracles and escaped the **mouth of lions, fiery furnaces** and the **edge of the sword** because they were protected by God. **(11:32-34)** They refused to deny their religion, even under the most severe torture – **“not accepting deliverances”** from death, **that they might obtain a better resurrection.** That is, that by faith they might participate in Christ's Resurrection and His Kingdom. **(11:35)** Many underwent the worst trials and lived in squalor and poverty. The sufferings of the blessed prophets provided the model for the divine apostles who travelled preaching all over the world without home, bed, food, but were scourged, imprisoned and martyred. **(11:36-37)** The promise that was the object of their faith was Christ, and they all died in the hope of its fulfilment. God's plan involved the salvation of the whole human race and the prophets and saints had to wait for God's coming to call all men to Himself. His **“better thing”** was the New Covenant which the apostles witnessed. The Old Testament saints could not have had their hope completed (**“should not have been made perfect”**) without the participation of those who put their faith in the Incarnate Word, in Him Who is the one promised, prophesied and prefigured in the Old Testament. The New Covenant brings forth the perfecting of

God's people – the full revelation of God and His Son. His perfect Covenant to replace the old, and His perfect sacrifice for all humanity. (11:38-40)

GOSPEL The Reading is from St Matthew [1:1-25]

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Peraz and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: after His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a

public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: *‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’* which is translated, *‘God with us’*. Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

EXPLANATION: Although there are 47 names mentioned in the family tree of Jesus, it is incomplete. Often the word “begot” jumps 3 or 4 generations. Each generation is reckoned as 40 years. The number 14 (twice the sacred number 7) is repeated 3 times (3 being a perfect number). The purpose of the selected genealogy of Jesus is to show that the Old Testament prophecies about the coming of the Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus. His coming was not unexpected. There are more than 300 specific Old Testament prophecies concerning His life and ministry. This very Jesus, whose human descent is traced through Abraham and David in St Matthew’s gospel, and even as far back as Adam in St Luke’s gospel, is also divine – “conceived of the Holy Spirit”. All this means that we Christians can now claim a new ancestry. Through baptism we can now have the source of our blood heredity in a new, pure, untainted source of inherited life. Through repentance and God’s forgiveness, we can step into a new genealogy from a new ancestor. The Eucharist gives us a new sense of belonging for his blood is

mixed with ours and we become children of God – members of His family, that is, His brothers and sisters and become partakers of His divine nature.