



### **New Beginnings...**

It had been a long day for these new parents. From being awakened in the early morning hours by the cries of a hungry newborn, to the comings and goings of guests who clamored to see the child throughout the day, Jose and his young wife were beyond exhaustion. They were poor by the world's standards possessing little more than the clothes on their backs. Every day was the same; Long, arduous hours of back-breaking labor followed by the lengthened shadows of nighttime when fatigued bodies could at last welcome a few hours of well-deserved sleep.

For months, this young couple waited with anxious anticipation for the birth of their first child. Excitement, joy, and fear filled each day. They had always talked of starting a family, but was now the right time? Putting food on the table was already a challenge; how would it be with a third mouth to feed? Also, they had never been parents before. Could they do what needed to be done to keep another human being alive? To be honest, they sometimes had trouble imagining themselves as parents. "That's what grown-ups do, and we are so young" they would confess to each other every night at bedtime.

Then the child came and everything made sense. Whether by instinct or observation, it didn't take long for Jose and Maria to be filled with overwhelming love for their baby. Within hours of his birth, this young teenage couple couldn't imagine life without their son and with each passing day, their hearts belonged to him more and more. There was nothing they wouldn't do to ensure the safety and well-being of this precious gift from God. They would give their very lives if necessary.

So, little wonder then that when word came to Jose that his child was in danger if they remained where they were, without a moment's hesitation, he made the difficult and life changing decision to move the family quickly under cover of darkness, leaving behind everything that had been familiar to them; work, friends, family. This place he called home had

always been fraught with danger, but now the danger was hitting too close to home. Now, “danger” had their child’s name on it. For some reason, the powers-that-be set their wrathful sights on this young, unknown family. No time for meticulous planning; danger was on its dreadful way and there was no time to spare.

There was one place Jose heard of that would provide safety and respite; A far-away country he was told would welcome them. Whatever it took, whatever dangers and risks lurked on the journey, Jose knew that this was his precious child’s only chance for survival. Out of a father’s unending love for his family, Jose was willing to go from “citizen” to “refugee” if it meant his family would live. Not knowing what would await them on the other side of the border, Jose and Maria trusted that they would find a place of safety and refuge in this new land.

Somewhere in the deep, dark recesses of their collective memory, this young couple remembered learning of a God who loved and cared for the “widow and the orphan.” (Psalm 146:9). Would this same God love and care for them? They even recalled the divine mandate of giving refuge to those seeking refuge (Deuteronomy 10:19). Would refuge be provided them?

Crossing the border into this new land, Jose, Maria, and their newborn son were given refuge and “*remained there until the death of Herod.*” (Matthew 2:13-15).

Peace and Love,

Pastor Doug