

## NO ROOM IN THE MANGER

***Luke 2:7** And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.*

Jesus is the Word made flesh. He is the God who made all things, and yet the world he made found no room for him when he was born. The Oxford Dictionary defines manger as “a long trough from which horses or cattle feed”. One would expect the God of the universe to be born in the most luxurious of circumstances. Caesars, kings, and other people of high status and note are born in surroundings equal to their importance and prestige. What, then, is God saying to us when he chose to be born in a manger?

First of all, he is saying that ***he is identifying with the lowest of the low in this world.*** There was no room in the inn for him. Do you feel totally unwelcome and alone in this world? Then Jesus is your friend. He understands your isolation and sense of being unwanted. Years ago, when I first came to this country and understood that celebrating birthdays was integral to western countries and that the objective was to appreciate and love the individual, I became sad. I was saddened by the fact that no one had ever celebrated my birthday, but thankfully, I looked at the manger where Jesus was born, and I took comfort in the fact that my Savior, the God of this world, identified with my pain. I listen to Isaiah’s characterization of the suffering servant again: “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not” (Isaiah 53:3).

The second message of the manger is that ***God became poor for us so that we might become rich. Most people are terrified of poverty.*** Deprivation is not something anyone wants to experience willingly. It triggers profound feelings of shame and worthlessness. We humans seem to always compare ourselves with what others have and make judgments about ourselves. Why is my life this way? What have I done to deserve this? The manger of Jesus is there to remind us that God embraced poverty to show solidarity with the majority who are poor. Now none of us can make poverty an excuse not to come to Jesus. The Apostle Paul encouraged the Church of Corinth to give a liberal offering for the work of the Lord because of this very same principle: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor 8:9). Can you imagine how daunting it would have been to approach the Lord if he came in all

his riches and splendor? The kings of this earth and our multibillionaires think they are rich, but their riches are less than rags compared to the riches of the Lord Jesus. The reason there are magazines dedicated to the lives of the rich is because the poor can never meet them and see their riches, so these gossip magazines sell the lives of the filthy rich to the poor and, in this way, take away more of the little they have. The message of the manger is that we can meet Jesus; we can approach the Lord because he does not invite us to him draped in his riches, but in poverty." And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20). It is easy to meet a person who is homeless; just go to the street, and he or she will always be found there. God became homeless for our sakes, so we can all meet him on the street of our souls, so to speak.

*Isaiah 66:1 Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?*

Once again, the message of the manger is that ***the Lord Jesus may have nothing and make himself nothing, but just as the manger was a trough for feeding animals, he fed all people.*** Bethlehem means "house of bread," and, surely, the Lord Jesus has been feeding those who come to him with the bread of life. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). It was appropriate that the Lord was born in a trough where animals would eat straw. I don't mean offense when I say this, and we need to understand it the right way, but we are no different than animals in our evil, degenerate spiritual condition. "They are all gone aside; they are all together becoming filthy; there is none that does good, no, not one." (Psalm 14:3). The manger was despised by humans but sought out by animals. Unless a person is humble enough and recognizes his or her need for the life-giving provender the Lord supplies, we will die of spiritual hunger. "This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eatth of this bread shall live for ever" (John 6:58).

In summary, the message in Luke 2:7, where Jesus is born in a humble manger because there was no room in the inn, carries profound significance. It reveals Jesus' identification with the lowliest in the world, emphasizing his understanding of human pain and isolation. Additionally, the manger signifies God's choice to embrace poverty, allowing everyone, regardless of their financial status, to approach Him. Jesus' act of becoming poor for humanity's sake demonstrates solidarity with the impoverished and dismantles barriers between people and God. This humble beginning also symbolizes Jesus as the bread of life,

feeding spiritual hunger. The manger, despised by humans, echoes the truth that unless one humbly recognizes their need for the sustenance Jesus provides, they will perish spiritually. This message challenges societal norms, inviting everyone to approach Jesus, not in opulence, but in shared humility and need.