

“No Room in the Inn...”

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“...and laid Him in a manger: because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke 2:7a

Each time that Christmas comes these words seem to strike me with great force. These seem at the same time so pathetic – yet so blessed. The thought also occurs to me: has the world changed since that birth some 2,000 years ago? Now he seems widely acclaimed. All men join hearts and hand in celebrating His birth – but them: there was no room for Him.

Mary and Joseph had travelled the weary way from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Because these two were of the lineage of David, they were required to register in Bethlehem. This was according to the decree issued by Caesar Augustus. For Mary, in her condition, the trip could not have been easy. The days, likely, were warm. The travelling stranger would have to trek through the dust. Weariness must have come upon them in the way.

Now the town of Bethlehem was in sight. It was not a large city – or even a large town. There was not a great deal of room for any influx of visitors. Probably there was only one inn – and not of the proportions of the hotels of our day. The few rooms were quickly taken. When Mary and Joseph arrive at the door of the inn, they are told. “There’s simply no room.” That must have been a disappointment. Who has not, in travelling, been greatly discouraged upon seeing sign after sign stating, “No vacancy”? But the predicament of Joseph and Mary was far worse. At any time the baby could be born. And they were so weary. The journey had been long and hard. But there was simply no room – no room in the inn.

Of course, one must understand the situation there at Bethlehem. Because of the decree of Caesar Augustus, the town of Bethlehem had been crowded with visitors. Mary and Joseph were not turned down at the inn because of some tendency to segregate peoples. The inn keeper did not turn them away because he did not like their appearance. And surely he did not understand that in the womb of Mary was the Christ-child, about to be born. He did see, and who could not, their desperate plight. He may well have felt sorry for this couple – but what could he do?

Yet that statement continues to echo through the ages of time: “No room in the inn.” It was not coincidence. It was rather a sign that within the world there is never room for the Christ. The devil seeks to persuade men that there can be no room for the Christ. He will urge all men to remove every semblance of His Word and truth. He will seek to push the Christ from this earthly scene. He will urge Herod to kill the babes in Bethlehem. He will enter the heart of Judas to persuade him to betray the Christ. He will provoke evil rulers of the Jews to condemn Him unjustly. And the wicked gladly cooperate with satan. There is no room in the heart of natural man, there is no room within the halls and palaces of this world, for the Christ. No room...no room...no room.

But God directs all of this. It is His sovereign and eternal purpose that in the very birth of our Savior it becomes evident that salvation is wholly of God. Man did not seek Him; they did not desire Him. Man did not plan or devise this way of salvation. It must become clearly evident that there is no room for Christ – that the truth may be seen that God Himself prepares a place for His Son; that God Himself works salvation for His chosen people. There is no room for Christ – that salvation may be of God. The testimony of lack of room therefore, reveals at the same time the gross wickedness of man and the sovereign, free, and undeserved favor of God.

“No room...no room!” How true is that cry yet today. Also in our world there is no room for the Christ. There is no room for the truth of His vicarious, efficacious, limited atonement. There is no room for a blood payment for sin. There is no room for His promise of glory and everlasting life. Man is too concerned with his daily affairs. Man will rather establish his utopia on this earth. Man will continue in his open rebellion against God and His Word. There is no room for the Christ in all his thoughts; in all of his actions or words. What a terrible indictment against the wicked!

The same is true in this Christmas season. Has man now suddenly, though for a season, found room for the Christ? Is man now ready to confess and acknowledge Him? Can we not be glad that we have such a season of the year when all men sing concerning the manger and the birth of the Christ? But man has made of Christmas a commercial venture. The songs, the holly, the decorations – all these are but to instill in the hearts of men the “Christmas spirit” so that they will purchase more of the material things of the earth.

But ought not this season of the year become the occasion for every child of God to search his own thoughts and deeds? Is it not yet our nature to force out the Christ? Is there always room for Him in all that we do and say?

Thanks be to God: Christ made room for Himself in our hearts. For it is the Lord Who opens the heart that one believes and confesses the Christ.

But is it always so very evident that Christ and His promise have proper place in our lives? How often do we not complain that we have no time to read and study the Word of God as we ought? How often do we not confess that we do not pray as we ought? Do we not insist that we have not the opportunity to study for society? Sometimes, do we not also absent ourselves needlessly?

No room for Him...

How attached are we to the entertainment of this world? How much do its songs appeal to us? How fascinated are we with its television programs? With whom do we seek friendships? Is there not very much room in our lives for all those things which are earthly?

But no room for Him...

Now the Christmas season is upon us. We go out and buy our presents. We decorate our trees. We sing our Christmas carols. We send our cards. We admire the abundance of merchandise of this world. We feast together.

Is there room for Him???

Children of God ought to consider seriously to what extent they have perhaps simply followed the example of this world. To what extent do we conform rather than being truly transformed? The separateness which supposedly is ours as children of the light ought to be more clearly seen. There is something very wrong, spiritually, when there is but little room for the Christ in the lives of those who profess to belong to Him.

How are you using this Christmas season? Rejoice in spirit and truth because of that wonder of the incarnation. Give constant praise to God for this manifestation of His infinite love and grace. When there is thus room for Christ worked in us by the Spirit of the Son, then there cannot be, there must not be, room for anything else. Anything that compromises Christ and His Word is rejected by the child of God. Show in your lives that you who have been united to Christ, have proper room for Him in all things.

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