

Christmas Eve

IS THERE ROOM FOR CHRIST?

Luke 2:1-20

Christmas Eve

Analysis by Bill White

1In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3All went to their own town to be registered. 4Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was a descendant from the house and family of David. 5He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 6While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 7And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

8In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9Then the angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see-I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12This will be a sign of for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." 13And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 14"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!"

15When the angels had left them, and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us. 16So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. 17When they saw this they made known what had been told them about this child; 18and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. 19But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

DIAGNOSIS: NO ROOM

Step One: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : *No Room for Christ in Our Christmas*

Honestly observing our lives, how much room, really, do we make for Christ? Recall Roland Bainton quoting one of Luther's sermons on the Where Luther Walked video:

"How much worse then, just as they arrive in Bethlehem, her time to give birth comes! Joseph tries to find room for her in an inn, but there is no room in the inn. Really? Of course there's room, there is always room in the inn, but no one is willing to give up their room for this pregnant woman. Shame on you, you wretched Bethlehem inn! You should have been burned in brimstone... Because of your selfishness, because of your blindness to the needs of this poor, lowly insignificant, pregnant girl, she has to go to a cow stall and there she brings forth the maker of all creatures because nobody will make room for her."

Bainton, quoting Luther, continues: "There are many of you in this congregation who think to yourselves: 'If only I had been there! I would have done better! How quick I would have been to

help the Baby!’ I can just hear you saying, ‘We would have loved to take care of the baby Jesus. We would have washed his diapers. How happy I would have been to go with the shepherds to see the Lord lying in the manger!’ Yes, you would. That’s what you say now because you know who the baby Jesus turned out to be and how great the Christ is, but if you had been there you would have done no better than the people of Bethlehem. Childish and silly thoughts are these! And if you think you would do better, why don’t you do it now? Why don’t you care for your neighbor who is Christ in your midst?”

Great question Martin, still today. Why don’t we make room for Christ at Christmas, i.e. why don’t we celebrate Christmas by caring for those in need with our time, talents, and treasures instead of celebrating the birth of Christ according to the customs and pressures of our materialistic secular culture?

Step Two: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : *No Room for Christ in the Inn of Our Hearts*

Our problem is worse than simply not making room for Christ at Christmas; it’s worse than not “keeping the Christ in Christmas.” The underlying reason we don’t make the proper room for Christ at Christmas is because there is “no room in the inn” of our hearts for him. A real, living faith in Jesus Christ is not present. There is no real fear, love, and trust in the one true God who comes to us as the baby Jesus, born to Mary.

Step Three: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *No Room in Christ’s Inn*

Worse still, if there is no room in our lives for a true, living faith in Christ, what will happen when Jesus comes to complete His work? As we stand before the judgment throne, will there be room in his Inn for those who had no room for him? No room for Christ = No vacancy?

PROGNOSIS: ROOM MADE

Step Four: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : *Christ Going from Crib to Cross Makes Room in THE Inn*

Is there anything or anyone who can save us from this crisis, from this judgment? There is good news on this night, very good news. Listen! The angel is announcing it, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign of for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger” (vv. 10-12).

This child is God-in-flesh who gives his life on the cross for the sins of the world. Jesus’ life, death, resurrection, and ascension means there is always room in Christ’s Inn.

Step Five: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) : *God in Christ Makes Room in Our Inn*

This grace-filled good news gets even better. This Savior, who is Christ the Lord, comes to us offering to make room in our hearts for true, living faith—faith that lives in the hope of an eternal room in Christ’s Inn. By the power of the Holy Spirit, God evicts misplaced faith thus making room for true faith, and in the vacant manger of our hearts God re-births the Messiah in us, and re-births us in the Messiah!

Step Six: Final Prognosis (External Solution) : *We Make Room for Christ at Christmas*

Better still, empowered by the Holy Spirit working faith in Christ within us, we return to our world glorifying and praising God for all we have heard and seen (Luke 2:20). The same Christ who forgives our past times of not “keeping the Christ in Christmas” now gives us both the desire and the ability to celebrate Christmas by caring for those in need and doing acts of justice with our time, talents, and treasures.