



Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne

Lowly birth. Mocking scorn. Humility. A couch of sod. These are the phrases that stick out when we first sing a song like this at a magical time like Christmas. Frankly, they can strike us as a little crude. We want to sing about angels and stars and boughs of holly.

And while there is nothing wrong with singing about angels and stars, there is something desperately wrong with *only* singing about angels and stars, for much of the critical message of the incarnation is found in our grasping what Christ left and what He became. His was no joy ride. He left His throne and His kingly crown for a manger and a crown of thorns.

If you are like most of us, the only time you ever hear the word “manger” is in relationship to the Christmas story. “And you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” “Away in a manger. . . .” Even though we know what a manger is, we tend to picture it as a lovely bed where the beautiful baby lies listening to angels sing around Him while wise men give Him gold.

What the manger was was a feeding trough... a crude, dirty, stinking, grungy gutter where the horses and cattle came to get their food. And lying in it, Jesus was surrounded by the sights, sounds, and smells of a barnyard. He had to put up with sheep’s breath and desert heat and donkeys braying.

In God’s great plan, Jesus was only practicing for the countless times that He comes to be born anew in the hearts of people. Before Jesus comes into our lives, we have nothing worthwhile to offer. As a place for the Creator of the world to abide, our hearts are anything but warm, safe, splendid castles where a drum roll and a royal robe await Him. There was no room for Him in the inn or in any respectable place in Bethlehem, and there is no room suitable for Him now in the world we have created.

But then the miracle happens. When we find room for Him, when we allow Him to come into the feeding troughs that our lives are without Him, He creates a dwelling fit for the King of Kings.

The miracle of incarnation has been said many times before – the Son of God became like us so that we can become like Him. When we find room for Him in the crude, dirty, stinking, grungy lives that we have created, He sets us free.

If we find room for Him, He will come for us, and we will rejoice.

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