

THE REAL 'SCROOGE' OF CHRISTMAS?



TEXT: Luke 2:7

THESIS: To show that folks living today may be more "Scrooge-like" than the inn-keeper who had no room in his inn for Joseph, Mary and Jesus.

INTRO.: A. The central figure in the celebrated story called "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens, was a man called "Scrooge." He was unconcerned & unmoved by the concept of Christmas. The question I want to ask today is his counterpart to be located in the innkeeper of the real Christmas story? Is he **THE REAL SCROOGE OF CHRISTMAS?**

- B. In our nation not only has the Bible & prayer been removed from the classroom & the 10 Commandments from The schoolhouse (& Govt.), but God is being purged from our society & Christ is being banned from Christmas! Though His Name appears in the word "Christmas," He cannot be represented in school plays & now the traditional Christmas vacation is called "Winter Break." "Merry Christmas" has been replaced with "Happy Holiday"! Nativity scenes are not permitted on Govt. property! The child born has been removed from the birthday we allegedly celebrate. Even believers celebrate His birth by giving everyone a gift, but Him & the Church He came to die for!

TRANS.: As we focus on the Innkeeper in the story of Jesus' birth, let's search our hearts to see if our attitude is less "Scroogelike" than his. Let's take a look at the Innkeeper & a hard look at ourselves in the process. **THE INNKEEPER – WAS HE...**

I. UNCONCERNED ABOUT MARY'S PLIGHT?

A. Her Condition: v. 1-6

1. It had been a difficult trip (on foot, presumably) of about 75 miles over rough terrain on a donkey.
2. Mary is in the last weeks of her pregnancy.

ILLUS.: This story shows how God views the fulfillment of Script. Mary & Joseph had to make this trip just so the Scripture prophecy would be fulfilled. He moved Caesar Augustus to take a census & to collect taxes of the populace, demanding that everyone return to the place of their birth.

Micah 5:2 *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

- a. Is it true that the Innkeeper (unnamed) was indeed insensitive to Mary's plight?
- b. Or is he demonstrating the opposite? Extreme sensitivity?

ILLUS.: The "inns" were not like today's Holiday Inn or Hilton! The "rooms" would be communal areas where everyone would sleep in the open. Perhaps he was showing compassion to a lady "with child" by providing the best & most private accommodations available.

B. His Circumstances:

1. The statement "no room" meant that he was dealing w/crowded conditions.
2. He could have displaced someone else for additional money, if profit was his only motive, surely he couldn't charge too much for the stable.
3. Some say he should have given up his own room.

ILLUS.: Perhaps we should ask what WE would have done given his circumstances. How will you respond to someone else's need this Christmas? What will you give or give up? Do you have a concern for anyone outside your family circle? What are you planning to give the Lord thru His church this Christmas? Will you inconvenience yourself for someone? Will you even pray for someone with a greater need than your own? Will you give a gift to someone outside your circle of family & friends?! Will you visit someone whose plight is worse than your own? Will you brighten a shut-ins holiday season?

TRANS.: Maybe his motive *was* selfish, monetary profit, or unconcern. But what about ours?! **THE INNKEEPER - WAS HE...**

II. UNAWARE OF THE MESSIAH'S PRESENCE?

A. If A Jew, He Should Have Known:

1. The O.T. Scriptures were available to him.
2. The Wise Men were able to track the place of His birth.

ILLUS.: I fear that we are no better than the Innkeeper. We are unaware of the Lord's presence & His prominence at Christmas. We substitute trees, holly, cards, gifts, gaudy decorations, etc. for Him. Most Christians make a sincere effort to keep Him someplace in their Christmas activities, but too often we let family, friends, fun & festivity to crowd Him out.

I wonder if I were to ask this day for the prophecies concerning the Messiah, how many would know where to find them? Do you know where the first one is located? (Gen.3:15) What about the prophecy concerning His virgin birth? (Is.7:14) Or of His birth as King? (Is.9:6-7) Or the place of His birth? (Mic.5:2) Or where to find the record of His birth in the N.T.? (Lk.2, Mt.1, Jn.1) His genealogy? (Mt.1; Lk.3)

3. As a Jew he would not only have had the prophecies, but all the types, symbols, pictures, ceremonies, sacrifices, etc. to point him to the Messiah.
4. Jesus was born a stone's throw from the inn, in the stable; he is without excuse.

B. If A Gentile, He Could Have Known:

1. The wise men were Gentiles, but they found Him.

ILLUS.: In Genesis, Joseph's Pharaoh accepted Him; in Exodus, some Egyptians found Him; in Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy some strangers found Him. In Joshua Rahab & her family found Him, along w/the Gibeonites. In Judges many Canaanites found Him (Judges 3); in Ruth the Gentile marries a Jew to become listed in the Messiah's line; in Samuel, Kings & Chronicles, the queen of Sheba & many others find Him & serve Him; in Esther she marries a Gentile to save her people & he becomes a believer, along w/many in his Persian Kingdom. In the poetical books (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Eccl.) many come to the Lord because of the witness of His people. In the prophets Kings & nations come to Him. And of course in the N.T. multitudes of Gentiles experience the new birth & become followers of our Savior.

2. Jew or Gentile are all "without excuse" for God has given us the greatest Gift of His Son to all the world.
3. In our society there are radio & TV broadcasts, books galore, Bibles everywhere, churches preaching Christ in every state & gospel tracts in gas stations, hospitals, restaurants, & even rest rooms - wherever faithful Christians have been, so there is no excuse to be unaware of Him!

ILLUS.: Perhaps he was genuinely unaware of the Messiah's presence, but if so, he is nonetheless w/out excuse. He could have found out w/even half an effort. Maybe some believer dropped the ball & didn't witness or give out the Word of God? What about today's "innkeeper" - will his blood be on YOUR hands? Are YOU the 'Scrooge' who fails to give the Lord His proper place this Christmas?!

TRANS.: **THE INNKEEPER - WAS HE UNCONCERNED, UNAWARE AND...**

III. UNAFFECTED BY MERCY'S PASSING?

A. His Position:

1. So near & yet so far...
2. We have no record of him receiving the Messiah.
3. He met Mary & Joseph, but failed to meet the Messiah.

B. His Plight:

1. His focus was on gold, not God.
2. His goal was money, not mercy.

CONCL.: Where are YOU this Christmas? **UNCONCERNED** about your soul's plight? **UNAWARE** of God's love to you & of His coming to die for you? **UNAFFECTED** that God's mercy & grace is about to pass you by?

As a believer, are you 'Scroogelike' in relation to the Savior this Christmas? Are you **UNCONCERNED** about the lost, about witnessing, tithing, passing out tracts? Are you **UNAWARE** of the Lord's presence in your life? Surely you cannot be **UNAFFECTED** by God's mercy & grace toward you, so that you fail to praise Him properly, give to Him generously & serve Him faithfully .

Gen.3:15

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Is.7:14

14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Is.9:6-7

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Micah 5:2

2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.