

"Unto Bethlehem"

12/21/59
Daly
Morning

Scripture Lesson:- St. Luke 2: 9 - 14.

Text:- Luke 2: 15.

Introduction:- Bethlehem was viewed from afar by inspired prophets of God's chosen people. As the prophet Micah scanned the ages through the telescope of prophecy, he saw the little town of Bethlehem and he saw the high honor that was some day to come to her. The most distinguished guest that earth ever has known, made his advent in the little town of Bethlehem.

There were no reception committees to meet him when he came. No bands played, no banners were unfurled, no welcome speeches were delivered by the dignitaries of the earth. No suite of rooms in an exclusive hotel awaited his arrival.

There was not even room in the meager accommodations of the small inn in the little town of Bethlehem for this most distinguished guest the earth has ever known. There was no room for him in the inn. It was in the stable of the humble home of a peasant that the guest from heaven was received.

I.

It is one of the weaknesses of men to miss the great things, the biggest things of life. It is a characteristic of earth to blind the eyes of men to the wondrous manifestations of God. Even the learned Pharisees who made religion a profession were utterly blind to the great event that has transpired in Bethlehem. This has often been a characteristic of church leadership in the presence of God's special manifestations of his power. The church of Rome was blind to the great manifestations of God and the great reforms under Martin Luther. The Church of England was blind to the great manifestations of God in the great revivals under the Wesleys. The established churches of our day are often blind to the manifestations of God in our age.

The earth was blind to the appearance of the greatest guest that was ever to walk

upon this planet. Heaven came to pay obeisance to the greatest event of the ages. Nothing had ever transpired in the history of the universe that equalled that which happened in the little town of Bethlehem when deity became clothed in human form, or the flesh. The choir of heaven came to earth to herald the birth of Christ in the sweetest song that mortals ever heard.

II.

The birth of Christ in Bethlehem brought to the village other guests which command our attention. These Bethlehem guests were different from ordinary men, just as the things of God are different from the things of the world. Joseph and Mary has gone to Bethlehem to be taxed. "And so it was while they were there, the days of her accomplishment that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" Love came to Bethlehem and love received its greatest transforming power in what happened in Bethlehem. The heavenly guest in Bethlehem sanctified the love of marriage and parenthood and gave to the world the Christian home. It makes a vast difference when love has been to Bethlehem. The stability and perpetuity of our homes hinges upon the visit of love to Bethlehem.

Other guests in Bethlehem were the "wise men" WHO SAW his star in the East and journeyed the long distance to worship him. They came to worship the new born Christ. They did not worship Mary, but they worshipped Jesus. Anything that would detract from the worship of Jesus Christ is a hindrance to our lives. Christ is the complete center in this story of the wise men following the guidance of the star. Christ is to stand preeminent in our worship.

Learning also found its way to Bethlehem in the coming of the wise men. Learning can only be safe when it finds the Bethlehem manger and bows in reverence to the Christ.

But the learning of seventy-five years ago, which forsook the Bethlehem manger, and in a guise of a new and modern modernism, wrought a fearful havoc in the life of the modern world. Behold what modernism has done in Germany! Note, if you will, what it has wrought in its deadly influence in the life of the American churches. Our learning must come back to the Bethlehem manger, if our nation is to be saved in the tomorrows that lie ahead.

The wise men had but one question to ask upon the journey: "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" This is a personal question for each one, each person to ponder well. Where is Christ in relation to my own life? Has he been crowded out? Have we made no room for him, as was the case of the innkeeper on the night that Christ was born in Bethlehem? Where is Christ in relation to my life? Have I accepted him as my personal Savior? Have I made him, not only my Savior, but have I made him my friend and the lord of my life? Have I heeded the call that he has given me concerning Christian service. Where is he that is born king of the Jews, in relation to my life.

Then there are two other guests which we dare not fail to mention. They are residents of Jerusalem, only a few miles away. They are Anna and Simeon. They belonged to the prayer meeting crowd. They waited in the temple in prayer. They were certainly in the minority, but they had a spiritual vision and an understanding that went far beyond that of the Scribes and Pharisees. They recognized the Christ upon his appearing and broke forth in in matchless praise for his coming. "(read it)

The small prayer-meeting crowd has always wielded a far reaching influence. We can well afford to join ourselves to this group, and participate with them in praying for the coming of the kingdom of our Lord.

II.

We are reminded that Christ was the Prince of Peace. Is he indeed the Prince of Peace? He is indeed. When nations and kingdoms will lay aside their differences and ask Him to point the way to brotherhood and fellowship then he will be only happy to show them the way to perfect peace.

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III.

The word "Christmas" has been streamlined by a speed-crazed world. Just what does Christmas mean? Some have thought it meant only the opportunity to make a harvest of money. The business man sees in it just that.

To a great multitude it means a season of gaiety merrymaking and carousel, to be brought to a close only when the old year has passed into the new.

But to a great host of redeemed folks, it is Christmas indeed, for they are reminded that the great God became man in the person of the well-beloved, that he might redeem humanity. To them, it is a day of rejoicing, for the babe of Bethlehem, whose name is Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. Is he your Savior today? Have you been to Bethlehem, by faith, to worship Christ the new born king?

Conclusion:- Shall not we today go with him who never wrote a book, never held an office, never went to college, never travelled two hundred miles from home, never did the things that men count great, yet today is the center piece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress, go with him, worship him, adore him, the leader of the world.

There is still a song in the air. Humble people, like those who came to the manger, are still worshipping the Christ of Bethlehem. Many homes are still dedicated to Jesus Christ. Many are the wise and learned who this day will bow in humble penitence to Christ.

The prayer groups are still praying and small groups are still gathering together in the name of Christ with an unwavering faith, to pray for lost humanity.

God grant that each one of us may measure up to the heritage which has come down to us from the first Christmas night over nineteen centuries ago.

Do you know him this morning? Do you know him, whom to know is life eternal?