

Meditation #25: ‘Stable’ Thinking

What does it say? –

STUDY: Luke 2:1-20

GOLDEN TEXT: Luke 2:11 and 12 = *To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.*

What does it mean?

For the first Christmas, Jesus began his earthly life housed in a stable with a few animals, as well as Mary and Joseph. The Almighty Lord of the universe could have selected any place, and it was not mere coincidence that there was no room at the inn. *The Creator does advance-planning.*

1. Do you think that the stable owner cleaned things up especially for Mary, Joseph and Jesus? What was the stable like? How did it look, smell, feel, sound?
2. Why was it an extraordinary sign that the Christmas Infant was born in a stable? How does Jesus’ ministry improve the lives of animals as well as people?
3. Would the humble shepherds have been more comfortable visiting the stable to greet the Infant than if he were born in a fancy inn? Could Jesus have been born in a place where poor shepherds—and animals—were not welcomed?
4. Did other people overhear the angel of the Lord speaking to the shepherds? Did others hear the multitude of angles praising God? Was the message of God-with-the-goats—the-Lord-with-the-lambs—just too weird to be believed? How did the shepherds believe?

What are we going to do about it?

5. Does the Lord see the stable animals as mere economic units, or does he recognize them as his splendid creations? Should we respect animals, not just as pets or food?
6. When does care for the animals matter to God? What would you say to someone whose behavior unnecessarily endangered some of these splendid creations?
7. Why did two of the most effective leaders of all time—Moses and David—spend years as unnoticed shepherds? What did they learn from the sheep, the rest of creation and the Creator those days and nights in the pastures? Are we non-shepherds missing something?

Truth To Celebrate: The first Christmas was celebrated in very humble circumstances where creation was well represented: people and animals greeted the Infant Savior.

Advent-Action: Creation-care is for humans first, and then for the animals. Do the birds or other animals in your neighborhood need some creation-care at this time of year? Some birds will even sing for food. Consider also volunteering your time at a pet shelter.

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