

## The Innkeeper - A Dilemma of Faith

If you have ever read John's Gospel to the end, you will come to this concluding verse which summarizes the life of Jesus. John 21:25 says this:

“Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. If every one of them was to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”

Many people, places, encounters, details, and circumstance are not recorded.

It does not mean, however, that they did not happen. It also does not mean that we cannot wonder, imagine, and think about what might have taken place in the details of Jesus' life. We do no violence to the text so long as we do not become dogmatic on things that the Bible remains silent.

We do know some details concerning the birth of Jesus. Luke 2:1-7 give us just enough to stir our imaginations about the time and place where Jesus made his arrival that first Christmas.

Notice in this passage how Luke situates Jesus' birth within a time and place in history and states specific names of people. Luke even gives us the specifics of what Mary did after she gave birth to Jesus.

It is here in verse 7 where we get to infer and wonder and dream and consider just what happened at the inn. (Share examples)

It makes all the sense in the world to acknowledge that just because the Bible specifically does not mention an innkeeper at this sold-out shelter in Bethlehem, someone had to open the door and interact with Mary and Joseph.

And we can contemplate without ever really knowing for sure how the birth in the barn may have caused the innkeeper to have a dilemma of belief. The Jewish people of that day were expecting the arrival of a Messiah at some point soon to help restore Israel to her glory days. The Messiah would come riding on a white stallion, leading the people against the Romans, and driving them from the land. The Messiah would restore Israel to her glorious past like the days of David and Solomon. Once again all the nations would come to Israel, acknowledging her as a great and powerful nation. This is where the hopes and expectations of the people lay. The Messiah would accomplish this!

But the Messiah... a baby? This is not how he envisioned the Messiah!

It's safe to say that whatever the innkeeper may have thought, done, or felt that night; he had no idea of the fullness behind what had taken place by the sovereign timing of God's plan. Don't overlook a specific detail that Luke gives in 2:6.

*And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.*

Did you hear that? ...*the time came*... Those three words are telling you that the sovereign God was fulfilling His plan, in His way, in His time. Let me put it this way: *God's sovereignty means He does just the right thing in just the right way at just the right time, for His glory and for our good.* The innkeeper may not have had a clue the timing was right, but God did. In fact, the Apostle Paul later wrote in Galatians 4:4-5 about this specific time that happened in that specific place with those specific people that were described in the birth narrative.

*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.*

The innkeeper probably had no idea he was in keeping with the perfect timing of God from all eternity's perspective. And the fact that the inn was full and the stable was about to be the maternity ward was all part of the plan. God decided to let the manger be the sign for the soon to be shepherds that would come and adore Him. And while this, too, may have been an eye-opening experience for the innkeeper to observe, it's doubtful he knew what the motive was behind the birth of the baby in his barn.

1 John 3:8 tells us the motive:

*The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*

The advent of Jesus the Messiah was a declaration of war on the devil himself.

The innkeeper probably did not have the full scope of that reality sinking in when it came to light that new life had just occurred out back.

At least, it seems, the innkeeper played a part in the plan. He had space on the property and Mary and Joseph and Jesus were provided space to start the greatest rescue mission ever instituted. Perhaps it was the beginning of a crisis of belief for him; a dilemma of belief. Who is this child? What just happened?

Perhaps you are experiencing a crises of belief, a dilemma —Do I believe that the Child born in a barn, lying in a manger of hay, is the Son of God, the Savior of the world? Is He really for us? Is He really for me? Let every heart prepare Him room. This appeared to be the action of the innkeeper. May it be the action and decision of your life as well. There is always more going on than you fully realize. Join God in what He is doing and rest in His sovereignty today. God always does just the right thing in just the right way at just the right time for His glory and for your good.