

December 20th

Mary and Joseph have arrived in Bethlehem. He has registered as a descendant of David, officially counting himself for the Roman Empire.

And now, after journeying many days without any comforts of home, they are ready to rest. To relax. To prepare to make the same difficult journey home. But there is a problem.

Luke 2:7b – *there was no _____ for them in the _____*

There is no room. There is no comfort. There are no amenities. There is just a stable. The holding place of the animals. Somewhere dirty and smelly and probably noisy.

They probably had fresh straw. Perhaps a somewhat clean blanket. But no bed. Just a dirt floor, possibly swept, on which to make themselves comfortable.

And then something that Mary had probably had prayed against happened.

Luke 2:6-7 – *So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be _____.⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling _____, and laid Him in a _____ [feed trough], because there was no room for them in the inn.*

A manger.

- “The Greek noun [for manger] is *phatne*, [meaning] ‘manger, crib, feeding-trough.’ A manger would indicate the location in some kind of stable.”¹
- “The word rendered ‘inn’ in this verse means simply a place of halting, a lodging-place.... The word rendered ‘manger’ means simply a crib or place where cattle were fed.”²

Why?³

- “By being in a manger He was declared to be the king of the poor.”
- “Further, in being thus laid in a manger, He did, as it were, give an invitation to the most humble to come to Him. We might tremble to approach a throne, but we cannot fear to approach a manger.”
- “This place was free to all. Christ was born in the stable of the inn to show how free He is to all comers. Class distinctions are unknown here, and the prerogatives of caste are not acknowledged. No forms of etiquette are required in entering a stable; it cannot be an offense to enter the stable of a public caravanserai. So, if you desire to come to Christ, you may come to Him just as you are; you may come now.”

¹ http://www.jesuswalk.com/lessons/2_8-20.htm

² <http://www.studylight.org/commentary/luke/2-7.html>. Albert Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible

³ <http://www.studylight.org/commentary/luke/2-7.html>. The Biblical Illustrator

Going Deeper:

1. *Why was this day the day our Savior was born, according to Galatians 4:4?*

2. *What sights, sounds, and smells could have assaulted Mary and Joseph as they went to try to relax?*

3. *Why was it important to God that His Son be born in such humble and non-spectacular circumstances? (Consider how it effects our relating to Him)*

4. *How does Ephesians 3:17-19 explain Jesus' choice to be born in these humble circumstances?*

5. *How might Mary have felt at going into labor and giving birth so far from her family and with probably only Joseph to help her (remembering they had not yet consummated their marriage)?*

6. *What is a "fullness of ... time" moment you have had in your faith journey? What did God birth for you?*
