

"I TOLD YOU, HARRY.
I HAVE TO BE BORN."

Meek and Lowly

HE THAT MADE MAN

WAS MADE MAN.

C.H. Spurgeon

Part Six
in a
Series

THE ROAD BORDERED BY MUD BRICK HOUSES was gone. The mingling people going about their evening business were gone. The whole untidy scene was gone, replaced by the opaque purity of heaven. The uncomfortable sensation of being trapped in a wrong place was leaving Harry as the two walked together upon the more familiar surface of the angel's home. Far in the distance was a dark speck, and Harry wondered if they were perhaps returning to the first dwelling in which he had found The Son.

"You're looking forward to it, aren't you?" Harry volunteered.

"I'm looking forward to what it will accomplish," Jesus replied.

"Well, at least your parents—since they know you're the Son of God—will surely give you a suitable lifestyle. Certainly you've

selected parents from a priestly, or even royal family."

Jesus brightened. "Actually they are of the royal line of David. I'll be meeting them for the first time in Bethlehem—the City of David, and Joseph's hometown."

Harry was getting confused again. "But you said they were from Nazareth. That's in the north, isn't it?"

"They are from Nazareth," Jesus said, "but you see, the emperor down there—it's Caesar Augustus right now—he'll be ordering everyone to return to their family towns to be registered for a census." Jesus grinned at the angel. "See how it's coming together? He's counting heads, so I'll be born in Bethlehem instead of Nazareth. Bethlehem is Joseph's family town, so he and Mary will go there to be counted."

“Ah, then they have a second home there,” Harry said triumphantly.

“Uh, no...”

“Family to stay with?”

“Harry,” Jesus sighed, “they’re in the royal line, but Joseph is a simple carpenter—an honorable man, but with very little in his purse.”

A Rough Hovel

The angel was again frustrated by what seemed to him a convoluted logic. Surely, he thought, the best way to get the message out—the best way to accomplish the planned task—would be to place The Son into a prominent family, into a situation from which many would hear the message of deliverance. Or, if not a highly-placed family, at least near someone with a position of authority in Jerusalem—better yet, at the temple itself.

“But why a carpenter,” Harry moaned, “when there are so many really important religious leaders in Israel—”

“Yes,” Jesus grimaced, “too many.”

“Wouldn’t any one of them be a better choice?”

Jesus answered with a heavy sadness in his voice—with the sound of a father whose children have disappointed him deeply. “You may find this hard to believe,” he said, “but most of the problems I’ll have on earth will be caused by the religious leaders. They will become the biggest obstacle to people believing in me. And they’ll go out of their way to get rid of me.”

As Harry and The Son continued on, the far distant speck had gradually become larger, until the angel could see that it was some sort of rough hovel, similar to, but also different from the first. This dwelling appeared to have been carved out of solid rock. Instead of standing free, like the first, this one was a deep depression in the side of a hill. As they drew closer Harry saw figures milling excitedly about the crudely-arched entrance, craning their necks to see inside.

But Harry’s mind was still on God’s logic in placing The Son in a humble, peasant family, rather than with a more esteemed family of prominence. It still seemed foolish to him. Exasperated, he said, “Will there at least be emissaries present to properly inform the public?”

“Mmm—yes, in a manner of speaking,” Jesus smiled as the pair came closer to the crowd of people outside the cave. “The shepherds will be close by,” he explained, “and they’ll tell others.”

“Shepherds?” Harry squawked, emitting a sound similar to that of a person being strangled. “Out in the country? What will you be doing out in the country?”

“Well, you see,” Jesus said as they approached the entrance to the cave, “the town will be filled with travelers there because of the census.” The people smiled happily at the pair, and politely moved aside to give them passage. Past the scruffy onlookers, the two stepped just inside the opening, their feet shuffling onto the deep mat of straw spread about on the floor. “So,” Jesus stooped to peer back into the cave’s dusty interior, “the only available lodging will be a stable.”

Who Is This?

Harry was again feeling that nagging sensation in the pit of his belly: the feeling of being in an alien place. The dust-filled air attacked his nose with the sharp stench of aging manure; around him came the bleating of lambs nuzzling for their place at a teat, and the baritone lowing of placid bovines incessantly chewing their cud. The light was so dim—one small oil lamp supplied the only illumination—that Harry could just barely make out the crouched figures huddled back inside the cave. And on top of everything else, he had a sinking feeling that he had just stepped in some-

thing warm and squishy.

Harry felt The Son’s hand on his arm. He looked up to see the smaller of the two figures before them reach down into the deep hay mounded atop a stone. The young woman appeared to be exhausted, her face worn and ringed by sweat-stringed hair that betrayed some great exertion. That she could hold herself up was a wonder, but she lifted the tiny form to her breast. As the baby found the nipple, the woman smiled down at him and murmured something private and warm.

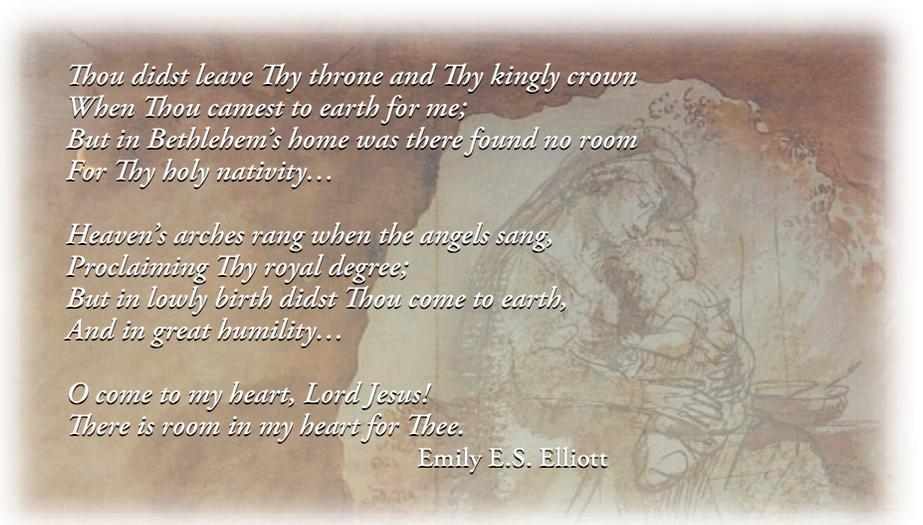
“Who is this?” Harry asked, still uncomfortable in this strange place, yet strangely drawn to the scene being played out before him. Who were these scruffy peasants with their newborn child taking refuge in such a wretched domicile? What sort of person would be so careless and unthinking as to give birth where the beasts were lodged? Surely these folks were the lowest of the low.

“I told you, Harry,” Jesus said quietly, as if he didn’t want to intrude on the moment, “I have to be born.”

The angel stared up at The Son, stunned. He couldn’t believe his ears! “You’re telling me that the long-awaited Messiah—the King of Kings—the very Son of God will be born in a filthy stable?”

Jesus chuckled at the angel’s not unexpected response. “You make it sound like a bad thing,” he said. “Harry, I’m not going to earth to be a member of royalty waited on by his subjects. I’m going down there to be a servant—so that I can wait on *them*.” dst

(to be continued...)



*Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown
When Thou camest to earth for me;
But in Bethlehem's home was there found no room
For Thy holy nativity...*

*Heaven's arches rang when the angels sang,
Proclaiming Thy royal degree;
But in lowly birth didst Thou come to earth,
And in great humility...*

*O come to my heart, Lord Jesus!
There is room in my heart for Thee.*

Emily E.S. Elliott