

# Missing Christ

Luke 2:1-14

## Introduction

I'm not mentioned in **Luke's** story of the Nativity of Christ, but I played a part. In fact, church tradition has made my part integral. I am the infamous innkeeper. I'm the meanie who wouldn't take Mary and Joseph in for the night. And in so doing, turned away the Messiah. Well, here's what really happened.

## The Inn Was Full

In my defense, I was doing my job. There are only so many rooms in the inn and when they're full, they're full. No vacancy means no vacancy. I can't help that. Do your hotels today rent out rooms they don't have? Bethlehem is a small town and we have one inn, a caravansary. This is an inn for travelers. We had a row of apartments on the second floor with small stalls beneath each one. The courtyard was open and was where travelers could socialize, and larger animals could stay. The town was full of folks from all over Judea, here for the census. As a result, the inn was full.

## They'd Made No Reservation

I couldn't help it if they got there late and all the rooms were taken. I couldn't very well throw out someone who had paid for a room, now, could I? Besides, I don't know if you're aware of this. I heard that the husband was originally from Bethlehem and supposedly had friends and family here. Yet, none of them put them up for the night either. That's probably because they'd heard the couple was having this child out of wedlock. But who am I to judge?

## I Was Exhausted

Truth be told, I was exhausted. It's a lot of work taking care of all those guests and their animals. It was late at night and I wanted to go to bed. Tomorrow was going to be another big day. Every day would be a big day until this census was over. Then, maybe things could get back to normal. With my business and homelife, I was just too busy and too tired to really care. Surely someone else could help them. So, I sent them away, hoping someone else could.

## I Didn't Know Who the Baby Was

Maybe it would have made a difference if I had known who the baby was going to be. I had no idea she was carrying the Son of God, the Messiah. At least, I think it would have made a difference. But what does that say about me and the way I treat people? He Himself said, "*as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me*" (**Matthew 25:40**). I had the opportunity to do something for Him then and there, but just turned my back. No matter what excuses I make, at the end of the day, I still blew it.

## I Did My Best

I had turned the couple away. That's when they tried other houses. Later, I heard another knock on the door. Opening it, I saw it was him again. No one would help them. Isn't there something I could do? I hesitated: "There is room in one of the stables. At least you'd be dry there. And the animals give off heat. I can bring some blankets, too." I don't know why I did this, but after getting the blankets, I told them if they needed anything else, just ask. And I slept close to the door that night in case they needed anything. I felt a little better, like I hadn't been a complete jerk.

## The Lesson

However, I still missed out on Christ. I never knew until years later, when I heard about Jesus of Nazareth and became a follower of His that He was that child. When I heard the story, I remembered the past and a wave of guilt hit me like a ton of bricks. That was Him? The little girl I made stay in the barn was the Queen of Heaven? All that was happening under my nose and I missed it. This Christmas, as you're making plans, having parties, exchanging gifts and doing all the other stuff, take a lesson from an unknown innkeeper. Don't miss out on Jesus Christ. Don't let the things of the world push Him out. Don't give Him second best and make Him sleep in a barn. Give Him the best that you have and let Him be born anew in your life today.

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*May the peace of God,  
Which passes all understanding,  
Keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

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