



Up Words # 7

MANGER SCENE



During this Christmas season many of us set up miniature stables with tiny animals and little people that represent the shepherds along with Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus in the center. We call these manger scenes. (The best ones leave out the wise men for they didn't come until later, and not to the manger - but that's another article.) Some of these are elaborate and expensive while others are simple and very affordable. We see larger versions of

these manger scenes at churches and sometimes in other places. We used to see them in public parks and courthouse lawns but fewer and fewer appear there these days due to court challenges and so-called "separation of church and state" issues. I think manger scenes should be allowed in all of these locations and like most of you, I would fight to keep our public spaces filled with these true reminders of the real Christmas story. Yet, perhaps, there is an even greater and more urgent responsibility than for us as believers to stand up for manger scenes.

In Luke 2:16 the Bible tells us of shepherds who hurriedly came from the flocks and "found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger." How quaint! How cozy. How cute. But have you ever considered the next verse? "When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child." (Luke 2:17). Note that what the shepherds related to others was not what they had seen but what had been said, "the statement," about this Child.

I think it is really easy to become enamored with the manger scene but forget what the manger says. The shepherds rightly focused on what it said. And what was that? Luke 2:11 tells us that an angel announced to these shepherds watching their sheep that there was born for them in Bethlehem a Savior, Christ the Lord. What the shepherds repeated to all who would listen is that a Savior was born and not what they saw at the stable.

Unfortunately many today know about the scene but not about the saying. Jesus is far more than some quaint, cute or cozy manger scene. He is the Savior of all who will turn to Him for salvation. It is our responsibility to tell what we know about this child. This Christmas consider two questions. What does the manger say to you and what do you say about the Savior?

Looking Up,
Pastor Chuck Circle