

## **Advent: Making a Home for the Homeless God**

by Ken Wilson Dec. 9-10 2006

The gospel is not just about God making a home for us in heaven; the gospel is also about us making a home for God on earth.

Focus today: what makes us think God would want a home on earth?

- + Genesis 1: God, transcendent creator of heavens & earth
- + Genesis 2: God walking, talking, at home on earth with us
- + Our exile from God led to his exiled presence from the earth
- + Tabernacle and temple: a dwelling place for God on earth
- + Acts 7: 49, God's yearning for a home on earth

Confusion regarding "the Second Coming"

- + Some silent from embarrassment; others treat it like a hobby

Confusion is fundamental: rooted in a blurred vision of the gospel.

Strong sense of heavenward thrust; little understanding of earthward pull.

Matthew 1: 18-25 (Proof God wants a home on earth and we're to help)

"Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly."

- + Two schools re divorce: Hillel and Shammai (Joseph chose Hillelite divorce)
- + A righteous man obligated to divorce adulterous wife

Huge, even global issues at stake, but it begins with the little things!

- + Joseph a carpenter who used his skills to make a home for God.
- + Marriage obligations: provide food, clothing, oil.
- + Ever after, our making a home for each other is tied to his making a home for God on earth.

Joseph and Mary take Jesus to the temple he is received by Simeon and Anna, fulfilling the temple's role to make a home for God on earth.

Jesus returns to the temple as twelve-year old; returns home for further development; all that parenting was part of making a home for God on earth.

Christmas, the feast of Incarnation, marks the beginning of God transforming the earth. When God comes anywhere he transforms the place he comes to.

- + Like a baby transforms a home in his likeness
- + Like a teenager transforms a bedroom in her likeness
- + God transforms the earth in his likeness

What does the nativity scene in Luke's gospel (baby in a manger, etc.) tell us about what God might want to transform by his coming?

- + A baby embedded in a family because relationships between us are to be transformed by God.
- + A baby lying in a manger, believed to be feeding trough of animals with whom he shared living space. Because we share planet with other creatures and God cares about our relationship with them!
- + All of it taking place in a stable which was likely a cave beneath an Inn.

Fact it was an Inn telling us "What it takes to make a home for strangers is what it takes to make a home for God on earth."

Likelihood it was a cave beneath the ground floor of the Inn is an underscore: God doesn't just want to hover over the earth; he wants to be on the earth.

Having arrived in manger, he later made his bed in a grave. The grave was a bed we made but he slept in it! To transform it by rising. He's coming again to complete the transformation.

We have theories about what that will look like when it happens. The field is called "eschatology," an intimidating word. It refers to the study of all the potential future scenarios.

Something you need to understand about eschatology. "We see through a glass darkly." There are several different theories involving different scenarios.

[sidebar on the "Left Behind" series as just one of many scenarios]

Like the resurrection appearances of Jesus in the gospels, there's continuity between the old and the new (he eats fish) and there's discontinuity (he can now walk through walls).

When he appears again on earth to complete what he's begun, there will be continuity and discontinuity between the old and the new, but we don't know in what proportion--and that makes a huge difference!

Maybe we should hold to our theories loosely even while we long for the reality passionately.

What we can say is this: His coming is part of the good news, because the gospel is not just about God making a home for us in heaven; it's about us making a home for God on earth. Whenever and wherever God comes, he transforms things. Our main task is not to accurately predict what the next round of transformation will bring. Our main task is to get ready by cooperating with the transformation plan that's already begun.

