

THE GREAT CHANGE OF PLACES

Christmas involves a great change of places. Paul explains it in 2 Corinthians 8:9 “*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet because of you He became poor, in order that you through His poverty might become rich.*” There are four parts 1. We were poor. 2. He was rich. 3. He became poor. 4. We have become rich.

1. WE WERE POOR. Paul wrote this to encourage the Christians at Corinth to be more willing to contribute to an offering of money he was taking to Jerusalem. When he said that they were poor he was not talking about not having much money. He meant being sinful, outside a good relationship with God, under God’s wrath, under the power of sin, under God’s condemnation, and subject to eternal death. To make that poverty worse, there was nothing they could do of their own strength to change things.

2 HE WAS RICH. God the Son was the almighty and wise Lord over all things. Everything belonged to Him. He had thousands of angels to do what He said.

3 HE BECAME POOR. Paul talks about “*the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Because He loved us, He went through an amazing change. When He became poor, He was not like a rich man who lost his money and had to live in a little house without fancy food. He still had all His almighty power and wisdom, and could still have called His angels to assist Him in everything, but because of you and me He did not use them at all. He became poor. He came into this world of sin and death to take all the world’s trouble on Himself. He could have become a human being and still kept His power and greatness. Instead, He came as a weak baby. He was not born in a capital city, but in little Bethlehem. He grew up in a town that was not even mentioned in the Old Testament, in Nazareth, which many Jews despised. He grew up in out of the way Galilee, where people lived whom Isaiah had called “*the people who walked in darkness.*” He was born of parents who were not famous. They were so poor that when they presented Jesus at the temple on the fortieth day they took the poor people’s option for a sacrifice, two birds. He allowed Himself to be despised and rejected. When His own townspeople drove Him away from Nazareth, He had no home of His own. Once He said, “*Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man does not have anywhere to lay His head.*” He did not use His great power to defend Himself when He was arrested in Gethsemane, or when He was crucified. More than that. Though He knew no sin, God made Him to be sin for us. Though He had always been life and light, He went into the darkness of death for us. He became poor.

4 WE HAVE BECOME RICH. That is true now. It does not mean that we all have millions of dollars. It means that God does not consider us sinners as sinful but righteous. Because He changed to help us, we say that God loves us. God wants what is best for us. That is worth much more than millions of dollars. The angels said that the shepherds and others were “*people whom God favours.*”

If He had not changed to take our places in this way, we would still live in fear of him. Now we can be joyful. When He was born in this great change of places, the angels said that they brought “*good news of great joy.*”

This great change of places means that, although we deserved to have God treat us as enemies, He treats us as His friends. We are reconciled to God. We have peace with God. The angels sang, “*on earth peace.*”

Some of our Christmas hymns tell us about this great change of places.

One verse is: Ah, Lord, who hast created all! How weak art Thou, how poor and small, That Thou dost choose Thine infant bed Where ass and ox but lately fed!	Another verse is: He serves that I a lord may be – A great exchange indeed! Could Jesus’ love do more for me To help me in my need?
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As a result of this great change of places, we have God’s love; we have great joy; we have God’s peace.