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# LUKE 2.7 AGAIN

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In his study 'Du *kataluma* à la crèche', *NTS* 44 (1998) 618–22, J. Winandy argues that Luke 2.7, διότι οὐκ ἦν αὐτοῖς τόπος ἐν τῷ καταλύματι, does not imply that an innkeeper sent away (for want of room, τόπος)[1] one about to give birth, but rather that his convivial κατάλυμα was inappropriate for the event. The argument attracts. But Winandy's seven examples of τόπος do not have this meaning.[2] Each takes τόπος in the sense of 'the place where one would expect to find something'. Τόπος can indeed mean 'the appropriate place' (LXX Job 18.22; Eccles 1.5; 10.4), 'home' (LXX 2 Chron 25.10; Job 27.21, 23; Isa 14.2; Jer 4.7), or even a temporary abode (LXX Esdras 1.4). But Luke's allusion eluded Winandy, as it does many of his readers. Isa 66 figures in early Christian apologetic. Matthew's Magi can be found there. Isa 66.19 appears as a parallel to Luke 2.34, and Luke 22.68 recalls Isa 66.4.

At Isa 66.1 the Lord asks where is the *place* for him to rest in (Ποῖος τόπος τῆς καταπαύσεώς μου); where could a house be built for him, materials being to hand? He favours only the person who is humble and contrite (LXX 'reposeful') and takes his Word seriously. He eschews idolatrous rites. Isa 66.7–9 promises (cf. Isa 7.14) a metaphorical but miraculous childbirth. Midrash Rabbah Lev. 14.9 relates the passage to Messianic times. The birth shall be painless (v. 7),[3] of a new nation. In the mother's man-child, says the Targum, her King will be revealed. Winandy was right, but his τόπος is at Isa 66.1, as perceived by Hugh Broughton (1611) and J. Lightfoot (1644) (*Works* [1822] 4.197).

[1] As at LXX Neh 2.14.

[2] LXX Ps 36.10, 36; 102.16; Nahum 3.17; Dan 2.35; Rev 12.8; 20.11. Nor do Job 7.10; 20.9.

[3] Like Sarah's: J. D. M. Derrett, *Studies in the New Testament* II (Leiden: Brill, 1978) 35–6. Isa 66.7 was used independently at Luke 2.7 and Rev 12.5 (to which Lindars drew attention in *New Testament Apologetic*) [London: SCM, 1961] 143). Midr. R. Gen. 85.1 (Isa 66.7 and the Messiah's birth) tends to corroborate this.

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