

## WHY A MANGER?



**TEXT:** Luke 2:1-16 (Please read the Scripture first. – P.F.)

**THESIS:** To show the significance of the birth of Christ is the lowly manger.

**INTRO.:** A. Most are aware that a “manger” is nothing more than an animal feeding trough, usually inside a stable. Of course this particular manger, mentioned 3 times in the text (v.7,12 & 16), has now been doubly sanctified, in that it became the birth place of our Savior & immortalized in the Scriptures. But the issue is not *what* a manger is, but rather **“WHY A MANGER”** became the place where the baby Jesus was initially laid.

**QUOTE:** AFTER JESUS WAS BORN, he was wrapped in strips of cloth and placed in a manger. A manger is a feeding trough from which donkeys, horses, and other animals eat. While we usually picture the manger as constructed of wood, the only examples we have left in the Holy Land from ancient times are actually large stones that have been carved out on top to hold straw. Adam Hamilton

B. The shepherds did not ask for a sign, but one was graciously given to them. They are to find the Savior of the world, the Messiah of Israel, the King of Kings, the Sovereign of the universe, God clothed in humanity...in a humble manger - an animal feeding trough!!! Why? **“WHY A MANGER?!”**

Luke mentions the manger three times in just a few verses as he tells the story of Jesus’ birth. This is unusual and should lead us to ask why. Why does Luke feel it important to tell us about Jesus’ first bed? And why does he mention it three times?

### I. THE MANGER IDENTIFIES CHRIST WITH HIS CREATION:

A. The Creator of Creation:

**Col.1:15-16** *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:*

1. As the Creator, Jesus was born and placed in a manger to identify Him w/His creation & His creatures: cattle, horses, sheep & goats.
2. The angelic hosts were no doubt present, though invisible; the demonic hordes were surely there, undetected or course; Mary & Joseph were there representing fallen humanity; the Creator has arrived on planet earth with more than sufficient witnesses.

**ILLUS.:** The artist takes liberties, often commissioned by the deluded religious leaders to paint the scene with the angelic hosts visible & the stable blazing with noontday light & glowing haloes over the heads of Mary, Joseph & the baby. All of this is fable & has nothing to do w/biblical fact or actual history.

B. Redeemer of Creation:

**Rom.8:21-23** *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

1. He was not born in a hospital to identify Him w/science.

2. He was not born in a palace to identify Him w/tyranny & warfare. (The power of Caesar was used to condemn Him to death!)
3. He was not born in the home of a senator or politician to identify Him w/politics. (Their life is one of deceit & corruption!)
4. He was not born in the Temple or Synagogue or the home a priest or Levite or Pharisee to identify Him with religion! (They are bound by tradition and superstition & later crucified Him!)
5. He was born in a lowly manger to show He was the Savior of all; from the lowest shepherd.

**QUOTE:** Spurgeon: "By being laid in a manger He proved Himself a priest taken from among men, one who has suffered like His brethren, and therefore can be touched w/the feeling of our infirmities...by being laid in a manger, He was set forth as the sinner's friend...The throne of Solomon might awe you, but the manger of the Son of David must invite you...Class exclusions are unknown here, and the prerogatives of caste are not acknowledged. No forms of etiquette are required in entering a stable...So if you desire to come to Christ you may come to Him just as you are; you may come now.

## II. THE MANGER IDENTIFIES CHRIST WITH HIS CHARACTER:

### A. The Prophecy of His Character:

**Zech.9:9** *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*

1. Perhaps this trait of meekness was chosen for God's great servants to foreshadow that unique lowliness & humility to be found in His Son.
2. Surely no birthing room could be more humble than a stable, & no cradle could be more lowly than a manger.

### B. The Proofs of His Character:

1. His human family was a humble one & surely it was unlikely that Mary & Joseph would ever have a child in Bethlehem (the place for Messiah's birth).

**ILLUS.:** Mary & Joseph lived in Nazareth & the time of her delivery was growing near. But God arranged for the official stamp of the Roman Empire to be fixed to the pedigree of the coming Son of David, by overruling a little tyrant named Herod by the decree of a great tyrant named Caesar Augustus to declare the need for a census & tax, demanding that all return to the place of their birth. Cf.v.1-5

2. In His ministry He revealed His humility by submitting to John's baptism.
3. In His lifestyle He revealed His humility & declared to one "would-be" disciple: ***"foxes have holes, & birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head."*** Lk.9:58
4. He even submitted to the authority of unjust religious & political leaders, soldiers & the cross itself: ***"He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."*** Phil.2:8
5. He was laid in a manger to identify His humble nature so everyone can approach Him & be saved.

## III. THE MANGER IDENTIFIES CHRIST WITH HIS CONCEPTS:

### A. The Meaning Of Life:

1. He taught that life consisted not in the abundance of things which man could possess.
2. He taught that life, real life, was to be found in a relationship with Him.
3. His birth in a stable & His bed becoming a manger revealed that He did not come to possess anything of this life's goods.
4. His coming to earth in a manger suggests that every believer is to live by faith, not by possessions, wealth, power or fame.

### B. The Measure Of Living:

1. Christ's coming in a manger speaks to us that His measure of His life was not nobility or social status, nor even parental inheritance, educational accomplishment, accumulated wealth nor even personal popularity.
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**Mk.8:35-37** *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. or what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

2. None of the things which man considers important in life were present in the manger.

**CONCL.:** "Measured by the Manger" how do you compare?! Are you saved? Are you living by faith? Are you living simply, humbly & frugally? Is your lifestyle characterized by excess, debt, drive for money, fame, popularity? Do you even have the life suggested by the manger in Bethlehem?

**Little children** can come to the babe of Bethlehem Who became the Man of Sorrows & Who said: "**Suffer the little children to come unto Me...**" **Young girls** like *Mary*, rejoice in the God of your salvation. **Men**, remember how *Joseph* loved his son. Come you **older women**, like *Anna* who blessed the Lord when she saw the Christ child. **Older men**, like *Simeon* take the Savior as he did. Come **common laborers**, like the *shepherds* & you **educated & wealthy** men as did the *wise men*.