

We step away from our study of 1 Peter as we come to the Christmas season. We will be looking at various passages pertaining to the incarnation of Christ, His first coming. Turn in your Bibles to Luke 2:7. I hope that you are here to magnify the glory of our sovereign God who has ordained all things for our good and His glory. I hope that you have come to hear His voice lifted up and hear His Word exalted and to come to see the majesty and excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are going to focus on one verse, and really, the last part of that verse. It's one that you're very familiar with. "And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." As we look at this text, it is my prayer that we will ascend the heights of divine revelation and behold the full panorama of the unstoppable purposes of God, even as we see them in the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every true believer alive today is heartsick over the way the Lord is constantly dishonored around the world, especially in our Western culture here in America—especially by those who claim to love the Lord Jesus Christ. Certainly the world mocks Him and scoffs at His Word, but how tragic it is to see predators and pretenders in pulpits of ostensibly evangelical churches. How tragic it is to see unsaved men, and at times women, who are immoral and greedy, who are leading churches because of financial reward. Charlatans, egomaniacs, fortune tellers, deceiving the naïve and desperate, and bringing unimaginable reproach upon the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a heartbreaking thing. And of course we live in days of apostasy. Apostasy that we know, according to the Bible, will mount. It will get greater, it will get worse. Naturally the undiscerning world looks on all of this and smugly laughs at the hypocrisy of "Christians," thinking what fools we must be to believe in such a powerless gospel and some fantasy Christ.

But in the midst of our tears of mourning, as we look upon this great reproach and observe how the world in many churches, sadly, has reduced the Lord Jesus Christ into nothing more than a spiritual Santa Claus who is looking for who has been naughty or nice so that we can give Him our list and He will meet all of our demands, as we look through all of that I must say that my heart nevertheless skips a beat when I think of the exhilarating joy of our Lord's glorification in comparison to His ongoing humiliation. You must understand that the rejection of Christ is going to continue even to the end of the millennial reign, when "all things are subjected to Him," according to 1 Corinthians 15; when He will finally someday reign in His full Trinitarian glory in the eternal state.

But I want you to understand that the Lord's humiliation began when He was born. This is a familiar passage, perhaps too familiar. Sometimes with familiar passages we tend to gloss over them and fail to meditate on the profound significance of divine revelation. But you must remember that the Spirit of God did not look for some "filler" here, and put in a few extra words to give us something interesting to read about. But rather every single word, every jot and every tittle, as the Scripture says, has profound significance. Again, I hope that as we look at this text we will discover truths of such magnitude that I fear the weight of their glory may break the backs of the very words that bear them.

It had been an amazing year for Mary and Joseph. They were young teenagers. Mary, we believe, would have been around thirteen or fourteen, and Joseph about fifteen. Godly teenagers engaged to be married. Justified by faith in a merciful and gracious God who would provide for them a Messiah Savior. A concept that, for them, was still shrouded in mystery, in symbol and in sacrifice. The angel Gabriel had appeared to Mary. That in and of itself would be enough to rock your boat for a long time. Gabriel appeared to her in Luke 1 and said, "you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God

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will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”

Of course, Joseph was shocked at his fiancée’s pregnancy. According to Old Testament law, she could be stoned to death. But he loved her and he, being a righteous man, wanted to send her away secretly so as not to disgrace her. You will recall that the angel of the Lord appeared to him as well. In Matthew 1:20 he said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Now, we know that Mary possessed a very firm grasp of theology. She had a deep love for the Lord her God. Her heart, even as a young teen, was saturated with the Word of God as evidenced in her doxology of praise, sometimes called the *Magnificat* that we read in Luke 1. Therefore, this young teenage mother-to-be knew that she was going to be pregnant with the Messiah. But she also knew from Scripture that, according to the prophet Micah, He had to be born in Bethlehem, and they were in Nazareth, some ninety miles away. She also knew that He had to be, as Messiah, the undisputed son of David in order to be the rightful heir of the throne. How on earth will His lineage be proven? Who would possibly believe this? How would this be accomplished? No doubt she asked herself these questions.

The providence of God answered all of that because in the providence of God as we read the gospel account, we recognize that God caused a complex saga of political and military machinations to occur as He moved upon the heart of Caesar Augustus to take a census in Palestine. And this would require every citizen to go back to their place of birth or ancestry to register. So Mary and Joseph get their little donkey and they travel some ninety miles during her last week or so of pregnancy. Can you imagine that, ladies? Walking and riding a donkey they return to Bethlehem, which was the city of David, their ancestor. There the official stamp of the Roman Empire would verify that Jesus Christ was indeed the Son of David. The rightful heir of the throne of David, fulfilling the covenant promises in 2 Samuel that indeed the Messiah had to descend from the loins of David.

So after about a week of travel they would have arrived in Bethlehem. Certainly the Roman officials that were there to do the census of all the people who would be coming in would have taken all of the good rooms, and there were no hotels as we know them. Many people would come and stay with other family members. Hospitality was a matter of life and death in those days. All of the available lodging was taken and we read in the text here that there was no room in the inn. That was probably not an inn as we would think about it, but rather a public shelter for travelers to come to tie up and feed their animals and a place to lodge overnight. Typically they would have been, as they are today, little courtyards with small, crude shelters to protect people from the elements. Oftentimes they were little caves, little cut-outs in the rocks. They still have them in Israel today. Tradition has it that Jesus was born in one of those little cut-out caves, but we don’t know that for sure.

There would have been little corrals for animals and as a horseman I know about corrals and horses and donkeys. I know that if there is a manger it has to be in a more secluded area because if you’re going to feed your little donkey, you can’t have it out there with all of the other animals that would be there, because the dominant herbivore in the group would come and eat all your hay that you paid for for your donkey. So there had to be someplace there where there was a manger in a secluded area. The hay would have been like our gas station. You’ve got to be able to feed your animal and they would

pay for the feed for those animals. Sometimes the hay would be in a little loft up above the shelters or in a secluded area, separated from the livestock. Many times the people would sleep in those places. That was probably what was going on there.

Mary and Joseph come to a place where they're in a little stall. The manger would not have been up where they were sleeping. Therefore we understand what the text is saying, there was no room for them anywhere so they had to stay out where their animal would have been. Those of us who have been around animals know that where they live there is the pungent, ammonia smell of urine, the odor of horse and donkey dung. It would have been a filthy stable that became the birthing room of the Lord of Glory, an inconceivable thought. But none of this caught God by surprise, because He has ordained everything, even this scene, to accomplish His saving purposes in those whom He had determined to save in eternity past. My goal is to help you think about this dimly lit and dungy stable. To have you join with me as we peer into that stable and we see blood stained on the hay from the birth. As we behold the afterbirth moved over there into the corner, and as we look at a little baby that is wrapped in cloths as they would do in those days, and placed in a manger. I want you to smell the smells with me. I want you to hear the faint cry of the Savior. My prayer is that by the power of the Spirit of God we will be able to look beyond the reality of that scene as it is recorded in Scripture and we will be able to grasp God's reasons for such condescension. That we would be able to stand in awe as we behold the King of Glory, the Incarnate Christ, through the dusty air of His humiliation in that place.

As I have lived with this text over many days, I believe the Holy Spirit has revealed to me at least three purposes, and I'm sure there could be more; I'll give you at least three reasons for such a lowly birth. Three divine intentions behind such an impoverished beginning. We want to answer the question: Why a Manger? I believe the answer is threefold. Let me give them to you and we will elaborate on them. First, to exhibit the King's rejection. Second, to establish the King's humanity. Third, to exemplify the King's subjects. From these meditations I believe will surface truths that will certainly be offensive to some. I might digress for a moment. It is never my intention to be offensive, but that will inevitably be the response for those who are proud in heart as they hear the truths of the Word of God. The truth of gospel has always been offensive. It caused our Savior to be nailed to a cross. Therefore, I understand that in preaching, it is impossible to be both popular and faithful. It is my desire to be faithful and true, and my prayer that you will be soft in your heart and receptive.

Why a manger? First, to exhibit the King's rejection. Here we have a picture of a world that will hate the Lord Jesus Christ. The reasoning here is not all that complicated, but perhaps a bit. Let me try to express it to you. Because man is filled with selfishness and pride, and because man loves to glorify himself with all manner of self-aggrandizement, with no consideration for the holiness of God and the wickedness of his own heart, man will naturally worship anyone or anything that will portray a likeness of what he wants to be. Remember, man looks on the outside, but God looks on the heart. Had the Lord come to sinful man in the splendor of Trinitarian glory, as He will in His second coming, had He come the first time in His glory, man would have instantly worshiped Him, but for all of the wrong reasons.

Remember, they did this even in His mock coronation, in His triumphal entry as it is commonly referred to, when He first came into Jerusalem on the donkey. They thought, "Oh great, the Messiah is here. He's going to defeat Rome and we're all going to be exalted. We're all going to have a great place of prominence. All the food's going to be taken care of from here on out. No more work! Nothing but blessing and glory for us all. After all, we're Jews, we're people of the inheritance." Well,

obviously they were wrong. They were in essence saying, as many people do today, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord...for He has come to exalt me! He has come to make me successful. He has come to make me healthy and wealthy and wise, to give my life purpose, to boost my self-esteem, to help me with my marriage, to heal my diseases, to eliminate my poverty and make me rich.”

But that is not what God had in mind. You must understand that there are two kingdoms that we read about in the Word of God: a spiritual kingdom and a physical kingdom. The spiritual kingdom is a personal, internal one and the physical will come yet future, it will be universal. You must understand that you will never enter into the physical kingdom unless you first enter into the spiritual kingdom. How does one enter into the spiritual kingdom? Through brokenness of heart, through repentance, pleading for undeserved mercy. As the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:3, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” A description of those who come to Him spiritually bankrupt with nothing to offer, acknowledging that they are utterly destitute. This is the picture that we have in the manger scene.

But for man to acknowledge that all that he does and all that he is, is fundamentally offensive to a holy God is a confession that man will never make apart from divine intervention, because man is spiritually dead. He has no capacity to even see his own wickedness, much less the holiness of God. You will recall that when Jesus came, He said, “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!” He didn’t begin by saying, “Rejoice, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!” The rejoicing comes after the repentance. Repentance is the key. In order for one to repent one must be humble. All of these glorious truths are an offense to sinful man.

So knowing how man’s selfishness and pride is enamored with the spectacle of anything that is spectacular and grandiose, and knowing how man would reject His call to repentance, the King of Glory is born in a lowly stable, not in a Roman palace. A picture of the poverty of spirit necessary to enter into the spiritual kingdom, as well as a depiction of the world’s rejection of His terms. His birth portrayed the very antithesis of man’s selfish predispositions. He was placed in a feeding trough, He was dressed in, as the King James would say, “swaddling clothes,” not in a royal crib adorned with purple and silk.

Of course the kings of the earth resented Him. We read about that in Psalm 2. “...the kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed.” We see that today even in our own government. In that day, Herod’s jealousy was inflamed when he heard that there might be a rival to his throne, some king of the Jews. He demanded that all of the male children up to age two be killed in Bethlehem and the surrounding vicinity. Certainly the religious elite hated Him then as they do today. They conspired to murder Him from the beginning. Even His own people that He came to refused to receive Him. Indeed, the world hated Him then as they hate Him now. All of this is pictured in the King’s obscure birth in that filthy stable.

My heart goes to 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 where the Spirit of God speaks through the apostle Paul and says, “...God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God.”

So the King of Kings arrived on earth in a way that would picture man's need for humility to enter into that spiritual kingdom as well as a picture of the rejection of His life and message. He would be born in a manger and He would later die on a cross. He would be born, probably in a cave, and later be laid to rest in a tomb. He would be twice wrapped in cloths, once at His birth and again at His death. He would be homeless in birth as well as in death. Indeed, the Lord Himself said in Matthew 8:20, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

Isaiah predicted that men would not recognize His worth in Isaiah 53 we read that, "He would be despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him." But friends, let me remind you, and sinners be warned, He came the first time in humility but the next time He will come in glory. Please know that the first time, He came to be judged, but the next time He will come as the judge. He came the first time as a Lamb that opened not His mouth, but when He comes again He'll come as the roaring lion of the tribe of Judah. He came the first time being borne along in a mother's womb on a donkey, attended by two humble teens dressed in peasant's garb. But we know according to Revelation 19:14 that when He comes again, He will be attended by "the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean," a reference to His glorious Church—that's us, dear friends, those of us who know and love Christ.

We know that He entered the world the first time with only the cries of an infant coming from His mouth, but according to Revelation 19:15, Revelation being the *apokalupsis Jesu Cristu*, the revealing of Jesus Christ, the glorification of Jesus Christ, according to that text we read that, "From His mouth will come a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and tread the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the almighty." The first time He came, He wore swaddling clothes. But when He returns, according to Revelation 19:16 He will be "clothed with a robe dipped in blood. . .and His robe and on his thigh he has a name written, 'King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.'"

But not only does God use this manger scene to exhibit the King's rejection, but I believe secondly, to establish the King's humanity. Remember, sinful man can never atone for his sin on his own. Man deserves to die. God's holy and infinite justice could not be satisfied apart from a holy and infinite sacrifice, and only by His own provision could such a remedy be accomplished. This points to the need for the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, because the Savior had to be both God and man. Jesus had to take upon Himself the nature of a man in order to be punished in our place as a man. Yet also He had to be God in order to endure the sufferings of all of the elect. As we read Scripture, we understand the work of redemption had to be accomplished by a *theanthropon*, a God-man. One who would supernaturally fuse the human nature with the divine nature, and form an indissoluble bond. Of course we know that the Lord Jesus was the offspring of David, according to the flesh. We read in Micah 5:2 that He was also God, "a ruler whose goings forth are from eternity."

We know that Jesus had to be, as the Savior, a man in order to bear the punishment that men deserve, but only God could drink it to the dregs. So both the human and divine natures had to be supernaturally woven together. How could Christ be our faithful high priest that can sympathize with our infirmities unless He were both God and man? How could Christ be our mediator unless He could somehow bridge the infinite chasm between God and man? How could Christ be our King lest He be united to us as a man, and yet only as God can He reign in our hearts and conquer Satan and sin and death? So the Holy Spirit had to produce this amazing union, an inscrutable mystery beyond our ability to conceive.

Beloved, Jesus had to be conceived by God and born of a virgin in order for Him to be both the Son of Man and the Son of God—Immanuel, God with us. A son of a virgin, according to the flesh, but God with us, according to the Spirit. What better way for God to establish the humanity of His Son than to have Him born of a virgin in a stable and placed in a manger?

According to Hebrews 10:5-7, we read that in eternity past the Father prepared a human body for the Son...a body that would never be tainted by sin, by a sin nature, one that would become the perfect sacrifice to appease the holy justice of God. This was the will of the Father and Jesus came to do that will, knowing perfectly well why He was taking upon Himself, as we read in Philippians 2:7-8, “the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” We also read in Hebrews 2:9, “But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.” This doesn’t mean that He came just to die, but to die for us. As a man, He became our substitute.

This is the very heart of the gospel, especially the doctrine of atonement. In an atonement, there had to be a provision made for a moral or legal repayment for some fault or injury. So when we look at atonement there’s two things that have to happen. There has to be satisfaction, and in this case satisfaction for the offended holiness of God, but that satisfaction had to be accomplished by an acceptable substitution for the guilty party. All of this pointed to Jesus. So what would appear to be an unsolvable theological dilemma was all resolved on the cross of Calvary. Think about it. How could a holy God show mercy to a sinful man? All sin must be punished. The wages of sin is death. So how can the Lord extend His mercy and grace to those who deserve to die because they have violated His holiness? He cannot merely ignore our sin and shower us with undeserved blessing because if He were to do so, He would abdicate His own holiness. But the resolution was found in Christ, because therein God paid the penalty Himself, causing mercy and justice to unite at the cross. All of this began in His incarnation.

Therefore, according to 1 John 2:1-2, now, “if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins.” Meaning, He is the appeasement, He is the satisfaction of divine mercy, as well as our source of divine grace. Beloved, this is why God had to become man. This is the heart of the Christmas story. It’s all about satisfaction and substitution. People say, “What’s Christmas all about?” Say to them, “It’s about satisfaction and substitution.” You can remember those two words. There can be no greater demonstration of the King’s humanity than seeing Him laying there in a manger, growing up to live a perfect life, even circumcised after the eighth day to be obedient to the Law because He was the fulfillment of the Law. He fulfilled all righteousness. The Word of God tells us that, “He grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man.” He would experience all that we would experience, yet without sin; all the temptation and the pain and all that we would feel, so that His perfect life could be credited to our account, which is the glorious doctrine of justification. Our sin is placed on Him, and His righteousness is placed upon us.

So, in the infinite mind of God, He uses the manger scene to exhibit the King’s rejection, to establish the King’s humanity, and finally to exemplify the King’s subjects. Think about it. There, in that dungy little place, lay the helpless infant, the Lord of Hosts, the King of Glory. As you look around that room with me, as you move away the dust, because if you’ve ever been in a stable you know that it’s constantly filled with dust, as you look at that little infant and you see two teenagers huddled there,

notice that you do not see kings and queens. You do not see princes and nobles. You do not see generals with vast armies. You do not see business moguls or celebrities. Nor do you see the Pharisees or the scribes or the Sadducees, the Sanhedrin. There are no vast crowds, clamoring His name, vowing their allegiance. You do not see anything that smacks of human grandeur.

But rather, you see two teens with no claim to fame, and a little wooden trough, a cradle of the Lord of Hosts, the King of Glory. Yet because of their faith, they were children of the King. They were sons of the most high God. They were a royal priesthood, as we all are who are united to Him in faith. They were two teens who were chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. They were joint heirs with Jesus Christ, sanctified by the very blood of the infant that lay before them, that had yet not spilled a drop of blood. An amazing thought in and of itself. Mary and Joseph were common folks. Joseph was a carpenter from Nazareth. It was said, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Galilee was kind of the “redneck” area of that region. The people there were by and large uneducated, poor and common people. And yet, these were the subjects of the King. Yea, indeed they were adopted into the very family of God.

Please know that the Lord Jesus Christ is King of the weak. He’s King of the weary. He’s the King of the poor and the pitiful. He’s the King of the broken and the bowed down, of the meek and of the lowly. “Not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble.” (1 Cor. 1:27) Joseph and Mary in the stable, what a picture of the King’s subjects. Not only in character, but in quantity. The few, not the many.

Will you notice at the end of verse 7, “...there was no room for them in the inn.” Not merely was there a lack of accommodation for the King, but His subjects as well. The world will never have room for Him, nor for us, until the King reclaims from Satan that which is rightfully His. We will find no refuge in this world, for He alone is our refuge. Think of how quickly your friends and coworkers abandon you whenever you start to talk about Christ. Think of the Herculean efforts even in our country to remove any vestige of Christ from our culture. Still today there is no room for Him among the monarchs of the world. There is no room for Him even among the religious icons of our day. Instead what we see, is that the Lord continues to manifest Himself to the obscure stables of those the world considers lowly. He dwells among homes and families who want nothing to do with this world. He dwells in faithful churches committed to truth more than numbers, more than some grandiose ministry. Mary and Joseph and their Creator—inconceivable to me—huddled together in that obscure and impoverished stable. What a picture of the true Church today, where only a comparative few people worship the King, and typically do so in obscurity.

May I digress for a moment and give you a caution. We must beware of any religious movement that has millions of people following after it. Because when you see that, there is a high, high probability that they are not following after the true King. Whenever you see great masses of people clamoring after Christ, beware, because it’s probably not the Christ of the Bible. From Promise Keepers to the Prayer of Jabez; from the Purpose Driven Life to the Pope; dear friends, if you look close you’ll see a very different Jesus. You’ll see a counterfeit gospel and a counterfeit Jesus. You must remember that very few will come through the narrow way, but many will be herded through the broad way that leads to destruction.

We saw this recently even in an “evangelical” leader who was exposed, who led a movement of so-called evangelicals. In that movement you will discover very quickly that it is one where the gospel is

widened to accommodate anyone and everyone regardless of what they believe, and the King is inevitably and consistently misrepresented. There is no resemblance of the true Jesus. It's no wonder why Jesus says in Matthew 7 that not everyone who calls Me Lord will enter the kingdom. Don't be deceived by mass movements, but look instead for quiet and often obscure faithfulness reminiscent of that stable when Jesus came. Jesus clearly indicated that the period before His return would be marked by such apostasy that genuine faith would be very rare. In Luke 18:8 He says, "when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

Back to the manger scene. Although there were only two humble subjects invited to witness and participate in the King's arrival, the angelic hosts quickly spread the news. But they did not go to Caesar, nor did the angels go to Herod or the royal dignitaries or the religious elite. Where did they go? To obscure, scruffy, probably smelly, shepherds, the lowest people on the socio-economic ladder. May I remind you that it had been 400 years since the Shekinah, the dazzling glory of God had lifted up from the temple and departed. Because of their sin, the people of Israel had not seen the presence of the glory of God in 400 years. Suddenly, it appears again to these shepherds.

In Luke 2:9-14 we read, "and an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'" Don't you know that shocked them? It doesn't say it here, but I would imagine they said, "Would you say that again?" "There will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.'" It's almost as if God brought some reinforcements to help the shepherds realize that this is indeed true. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." That can literally be translated, "Peace to those to whom it pleases Him to give peace."

As we close, I want you to think with me. It's amazing that God ordained even this event with the shepherds, right after the birth of Christ. He ordained this event before time began. You see, God wasn't surprised when Mary and Joseph came to Bethlehem, and oh my goodness, there's no room. What are we going to do? I guess we're just going to have to sleep over there with the animals and tether the donkey here. There's a manger, I guess that's what we'll use. Friends, that is not the God of the Bible. All of this was ordained. He's saying here, even with the angels, "Peace among men with whom He is pleased." The point is that God chose to save some just because He was pleased to do it. The angels are not glorifying God here because of what man has done or for what man someday will do, but because of what God has done. Salvation is not some prize that man earns when he demonstrates good will towards other men. That is a gross misrepresentation of the gospel. Salvation is God's gift of grace given to those whom He pleases to save.

What incredibly good news this was to Mary, Joseph and the shepherds—and to all of us. The shepherds who, being recipients of His undeserved grace, then ran immediately to the stable to find their Savior and their King, lying there in a manger, along with two other fellow subjects who were likewise saved by grace. I think that just maybe, those shepherds came in and looked at all of this and they stared into the eyes of Joseph and Mary, and Joseph and Mary back to them, and they

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undoubtedly discussed the incongruity of what this is. This is the Messiah, in here? The Son of David in this stinking stable? This is inconceivable. Lying in a manger as a baby?

Perhaps they said, “God must be trying to tell us something. Perhaps He is trying to exhibit the King’s rejection. Perhaps He is trying to establish the King’s humanity. Perhaps He’s even trying to exemplify the King’s subjects.” I pray that you will make room in your heart for the Lord Jesus Christ. That you would place your faith in His saving grace if you haven’t. I pray that you will confess Him as Savior and Lord, believe that He came and He lived a perfect life and He died in your and my place, and He was buried and He was raised again, and that someday He’s coming again. I would ask you to bow before Him today. Bow before His manger as well as His cross, lest you be cut off from Him forever.

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