

***December 29, 2019***

Communion Meditation

The word for manger only appears in St. Luke's Gospel. And *three* of its *four* times are here in Luke 2. After Mary gives birth, she wraps Him and lays Him in a manger (v 7). The angels tell the shepherds that the *SIGN* that they've found the right place is that they will see a baby ... *wrapped* and lying in a *manger* (v 12). And so they go and they indeed *FIND* the baby in a *manger* (v 16).

The angels don't say, "Take a left at the Starbucks, and go a mile, then look for the cave under an olive tree," right? They say look for a baby *in a manger*. That's how you'll know that you've found the Savior who is Christ the Lord. In the Old Testament, empty mangers mean that there's a famine. Full mangers mean God has blessed His People with bounty. Mangers mean ownership of the animals that feed there—which is why wild oxen and wild donkeys won't stay at a manger.

A manger filled by a baby tells the shepherds that God has visited and blessed His People, and shows all who come to the manger that He is their true sovereign. That He is their true Caesar. When we answer the invitation to come to the Lord's table, to the memorial of the death of Jesus Christ for our sins...When we feed on the body and blood of Christ in faith that His sacrifice is our life...

...He is giving us a sign that we will find our Savior, who was wrapped in grave-clothes and laid in a tomb...but who rose to new life and toppled world empires.

Come to His table of life now, because if you are baptized, you are of the house and lineage of Christ! Come to His table and be registered by Him, as His own people!

Word of Commission

Today we've been given a glimpse of the cosmic reality of Christmas. Christmas is not just one day of nostalgic emotions and tasty food. Christmas is the beginning of the end for the world empires, and in the Church, Christ is filling the earth with His holy mountain!

Christmas isn't one day but 12 days of celebration of this fact! The birth of Christ was in such an unassuming way, in such an unexpected place, despite an all-power Caesar who thought he was orchestrating all things...when really, God was sovereignly orchestrating all things, *God* was the all-powerful mover of events, *God* wasn't caught by surprise in the least.

No matter the external world circumstances we come up against, the worries we see out there, our faith must be in God's sovereign control. He can use anything. He can change anything in a moment's notice. You need fear no president, prime minister, or dictator. Rather, they must fear the Lord, or expect His judgment.