

## **“God, Lying in a Manger” – Sat. Dec. 20, 2025, 11:30 AM**

HopeSide’s Divine Service Sabbath Program Sermonettes

Key Text: [Luke 2:12](#)

*“And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”*

**Intro:** God, as Jesus, lying in a manger signifies the ultimate humility and self-emptying of the divine, becoming the spiritual food (Eucharist, Word) for humanity, a stark contrast to earthly power, fulfilled prophecy, and a profound symbol of God entering our suffering to offer salvation and life, as recounted in Luke 2:7, 12, 16. **(PERSON)**

**Note:** Various Participants can read the various paragraphs and very briefly comment on each section chosen to be read as shown below. About 3-5 min max for each person.

**“Nothing to Nothing for Everything”:** **PERSON 1**. This person can also talk about how there is mention about Jesus’ birth, death and resurrection in Chinese astrology records.

Check here > <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRqumsGuFo8>

### **PERSON 2**

#### **“Swaddling Clothes”:**

##### **Historical & Biblical Swaddling**

- **Method:** Long strips of cloth wrapped tightly around a baby's shoulders to feet.
- **Beliefs:** Thought to keep limbs straight and strong, and also functioned as diapers.
- **Significance:** In scripture, Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes like sacrificial lambs, symbolizing his role as the pure, sacrificial Lamb of God.

In religious and traditional views, **swaddling clothes** for Jesus carry a dual significance of normal human practice and profound theological symbolism, specifically foreshadowing his death and highlighting God's humility.

##### **Traditional and Theological Views**

- **Common Human Practice:** Swaddling was a standard ancient practice for newborns, involving wrapping them tightly in strips of cloth to provide warmth, security, and proper limb alignment. The mention in Luke's Gospel simply affirms Jesus's entry into full human existence, a mortal beginning shared by everyone, including kings.
- **A "Sign" for the Shepherds:** The angel tells the shepherds that the swaddling clothes in a *manger* (an animal feeding trough) would be a "sign" to them (Luke 2:12). While swaddling itself was common, a swaddled baby in a feeding trough was unusual. Some

traditions suggest these specific shepherds raised defect-free lambs for temple sacrifice and used swaddling cloths to keep the lambs unblemished, instantly recognizing the symbolism of the "Lamb of God".

- **Humility and Identification with Humanity:** The image of the all-powerful Creator wrapped in simple cloths in a lowly stable emphasizes God's humility and vulnerability, choosing to be "God with us" (Emmanuel) in the most unassuming way.
- **Foreshadowing of Burial:** Many scholars and theological perspectives see the swaddling clothes as a poignant parallel to the linen cloths Jesus was wrapped in after his crucifixion and burial (Luke 23:53, John 19:40). This connection suggests that from birth, Jesus was set apart for his ultimate mission to die and rise again for the salvation of mankind.
- **Symbol of Proper Care and Loyalty:** In contrast to being a sign of poverty, some views suggest that washing, salting, and swaddling a newborn were signs of being properly cared for and integrated into the covenant, as mentioned in Ezekiel 16:4. Thus, Jesus was shown to be a loyal and faithful Son of God.

### **PERSON 3**

#### **Biblical Significance of "Jesus, lying in a manger":**

- **Fulfilment of Prophecy:** The prophet Micah 5:2 foretold the Messiah's birth in Bethlehem, a detail fulfilled in this humble setting.
- **A Sign:** An angel told shepherds they'd find the baby "lying in a manger," a simple, distinctive sign to locate the newborn Lord amidst many newborns in Bethlehem.
- **Humiliation:** The Creator of all things, **God, placed in an animal's feeding trough,** demonstrates profound humility and identification with the poor and lowly.

### **PERSON 4**

- **"The Bread of Life":** The manger, a feeding trough, symbolizes Jesus as the true spiritual food, the Eucharist, and His Word that nourishes believers for eternal life, as seen in John 6:35.

"I am the bread of life" (John 6:35) is one of the seven "I Am" statements of Jesus. Jesus used the same phrase "I AM" in seven declarations about Himself. In all seven, He combines I AM with tremendous metaphors which express His saving relationship toward the world. All appear in the book of John.

John 6:35 says, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

Bread is considered a staple food—i.e., a basic dietary item. A person can survive a long time on only bread and water. Bread is such a basic food item that it becomes synonymous for food in general. We even use the phrase “breaking bread together” to indicate the sharing of a meal with someone. Bread also plays an integral part of the Jewish Passover meal. The Jews were to eat unleavened bread during the Passover feast and then for seven days following as a celebration of the exodus from Egypt. Finally, when the Jews were wandering in the desert for 40 years, God rained down “bread from heaven” to sustain the nation (Exodus 16:4).

## **PERSON 5**

- **“God's Radical Solution”:** This setting foreshadows the radical solution to sin—Jesus's life, death, and resurrection—demonstrating God's willingness to enter our deepest pain and humiliation for our salvation.
- **A Banquet for Sinners:** The manger scene presents God's kingdom where the humble (shepherds) and the sinful (represented by animals) gather around the "Bread of Life" for spiritual sustenance, according to a 1517 article.

### **Historical Context (of manger's location)**

- Early nativity scenes often depicted the manger within a shared living/animal space, not necessarily a separate stable, making the baby's placement even more intimate and central
- The image of God (Jesus Christ) lying in a manger refers to the biblical account of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, as described primarily in the Gospel of Luke. **A manger is an animal feeding trough, and this humble setting is a central symbol of Christian faith, emphasizing humility, God's accessibility, and the fulfilment of prophecy.**

## **PERSON 6 – “No Room at the Inn”**

### **The Biblical Account**

According to Luke 2:1-20, Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem for a Roman census. Because "there was no room for them in the inn," Mary gave birth to Jesus and "laid him in a manger". The angel announcing the birth to nearby shepherds gave them a specific sign to identify the Savior: "You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger". The shepherds went "with haste" and found the baby exactly as described, confirming the angel's message.

### **Theological Significance**

The detail of the manger is rich with symbolic meaning for Christians:

**Humility and Identification with the Poor Instead of a royal cradle, the King of kings was born in the lowliest of circumstances, identifying with the poor and marginalized.**

**Accessibility:** The absence of palace gates or guards meant that even common shepherds could approach the newborn Lord, symbolizing His accessibility to all people, regardless of their status.

The "Bread of Life" A manger holds food (hay or grain) for animals. Theologians often interpret this as a foreshadowing of Jesus' role as the "Bread of Life" (John 6:35), the spiritual nourishment for humanity.

## **PERSON 7**

**“A Planned Sign”:** The specific nature of the sign (a baby in a manger) suggests that the event was part of God's intentional plan, not a random misfortune, demonstrating divine sovereignty and the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah's humble arrival.

The Path to the Cross The humility of the manger is seen as the first step on the "Calvary road," foreshadowing the ultimate self-emptying and sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

## **PERSON 8 (Anand K.C.)**

**“Becoming Nothing”:** If you were to arrange the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, how would you do it? Grand, spectacular, lights, in a palace, best singers in a concert with the best music and feasting? All these can be done but it will not change anything or the one thing that needs to change which is the heart. God came as nothing to address the heart problem or spirit or spiritual problem of those made in His own likeness but rebelled. Jesus, the Creator God was born and placed in a manger, a feeding trough for animals. In other words, God Himself came as nothing and was crucified as nothing between two thieves almost naked to give everything which is life eternal. Are you willing to accept God lying in a manger?

Are we willing to become nothing to receive everything?

Are we willing to become nothing for the sake of giving something to someone who has nothing?

The parable of the Good Samaritan (Samaritans were despised at that time by the Jews and vice versa) is about a Samaritan who gave away his time and treasure to care for a Jew who was beaten, robbed and left for dead on a highway between Jericho and Jerusalem. A Levite and a Priest passed by without helping. This story is about overcoming any social, religious or political barriers to help anyone in need. This is what the message of Christ and Christmas is that we are to empty ourselves in the service of anyone in need.

God became nothing for us to become everything but it starts with becoming nothing or zero or the Sabbath. The purpose of the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath is to stop from our regular activities and empty ourselves in God in the time He set apart from week to week or Sabbath to Sabbath, to

let go and let God come in fully and fill us so that we can live in peace and love to God and fellow man instead of being torn apart by the worries and cares of this world.

Jesus our Lord came to be with us to become a servant of servants, to offer the sacrifice of sacrifices to save our souls. (SOS)

Unless we become nothing, we will not get everything. Unless we empty everything, we cannot get the very thing that means everything which is life eternal that is opposite to life that is temporal or temporary here and now. One can ask this question: My god, my God, why have you forsaken everything and became nothing? Perhaps, it can be answered as: unless God emptied Himself, nothing would have worked out. There was everything in heaven and yet, the highest angel thought it was missing something and then rebelled and lost everything. It takes a lot of faith to become nothing or empty everything of self like how God Himself became as nothing to give us everything.

**Phil. 2:2-11 to be read by Pastor's mother in a responsive manner**

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. (All read)

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (All read)

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (All read)

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: (All read)

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (All read)

**Are we willing to become nothing or the Sabbath for the sake of everything?**

**“The Wise Men” – PERSON 9**

**PERSON 10 – “God, in a Manger” - Pastor**

**Closing Special: “Silent Hallelujah”**

Demo: <https://praiselive.com/list/demo/Silent%20Night%20Hallelujah.mp3>

Lyrics: <https://praiselive.com/list/pdf/Silent%20Hallelujah.pdf> (Em)

**Note:** A polished or a better version of “Silent Hallelujah” is planned to be ready by this week’s service or by Dec. 25, 2025.



# *God, Lying in a Manger*

Christmas program by HopeSide Community Church



10702 Cherry Tree Court, Hyattsville, Maryland 20783  
Dec. 20, 2025, 11:30am, followed by lunch

**All are welcome**

**HopeSide.org**

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