

Luke 2:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

The angel gives the shepherds a sign: 'Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.' The humble sign contrasts dramatically with the glorious announcement—the Savior, Christ the Lord, identified not by royal regalia but by poverty and humility. A manger (feeding trough) as cradle signals both Jesus' identification with humanity's lowest condition and His future role as bread of life feeding the spiritually hungry. The ordinary sign makes the extraordinary birth verifiable—the shepherds can find and confirm what they've heard.

Historical Context

Swaddling clothes (strips of cloth wound around infants) were standard practice, but their mention emphasizes ordinariness—nothing distinguished this baby externally from any other. The manger as cradle indicated extreme poverty—no room in the inn forced the holy family to use animal accommodations. Bethlehem, though David's city, had no palace, no royal facilities. The King of kings entered the world in maximum humility, identifying completely with human poverty and vulnerability. This fulfills Isaiah 53's suffering servant who had 'no beauty that we should desire him.'

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the humble sign (baby in manger) contrast with the glorious announcement (Savior, Christ the Lord)?
2. What theological significance does Christ's birth in poverty have for understanding the incarnation's purpose?

Interlinear Text

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|------------------------------|----------|----------|-------|-----------------|---------------|----------|
| καὶ | τοῦτο | ὑμῖν | τὸ | σημεῖον | εὐρήσετε | βρέφος |
| And | this | unto you | G3588 | shall be a sign | Ye shall find | the babe |
| G2532 | G5124 | G5213 | | G4592 | G2147 | G1025 |
| | | | | | | |
| ἐσπαργανωμένον | κείμενον | ἐν | τῇ | φάτνῃ | | |
| wrapped in swaddling clothes | lying | in | G3588 | a manger | | |
| G4683 | G2749 | G1722 | | G5336 | | |

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 7:14 (Parallel theme): Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:11 (Parallel theme): Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

Psalms 22:6 (Parallel theme): But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.