

Introduction

1. "And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn"
2. Each year Christmas comes and we celebrate Jesus' birthday – how He came from heaven, took on our flesh and human nature, and was laid in a manger
3. But as you know, Jesus is not born again year after year – He was only born once – over 2,000 years ago
4. So – where is Jesus now?

I. Some people still want Him to be PUT "AWAY" in a manger

- A. Some people like Jesus in the manger – and they want to keep Him there
 - i. A "Baby" Jesus is non-threatening
 - ii. Actually, we can have our way with babies – they have no power or authority over us
 - iii. The world likes to look into the manger at this cute, sweet, cuddly baby Jesus; He is so small, and we seem so big
- B. But after Christmas, so many people put Jesus "away" – They put Him "away" in the manger
 - i. They wrap Him up, put Him in a box, and store Him in their attic for another year
 - ii. When we put Jesus "AWAY" in the manger – somehow we think He can not see us, or know our thoughts, or hear our words
 - iii. With Jesus put "AWAY" in the manger – we go on with our hating, our yelling, our crude jokes, our lustful thoughts, talking back to mom and dad, not coming to church each Sunday – because after all –
 - iv. We have put Jesus "AWAY" – in the manger

II. The children tonight tell us of a Baby born in Bethlehem, laid in a manger, praised by the angels, adored by the Shepherds, worshiped by the Wise Men, followed by millions of people through the ages

- A. I invite YOU to look into the manger – and behold GOD!
 - i. Behold Jesus, who is not AWAY – in the manger
 - ii. Behold Jesus, who is THE WAY – in the manger
- B. This same Jesus grew up and became a man: fully God, fully man
 - i. And this Jesus spoke to His disciples, and said, "I AM "THE WAY", the truth, and the life

- ii. Jesus is THE WAY – THE WAY in a manger, THE WAY to the forgiveness of all our sins, and the WAY to our eternal life
- C. Many have compared the manger to the cross
- i. Jesus is laid in a crude manger, and is crucified on a crude cross
 - ii. Just as nails may have held the manger together, so nails held this Jesus Christ to the cross
 - iii. This Jesus is THE WAY in the manger: the Way for us to be saved: as this Jesus takes on your flesh and mine, and with our flesh – takes on our sins, and misery, and eternal death
 - iv. THE WAY in the manger dies on the cross, but also triumphantly rises from the dead – giving new and eternal life to all who believe in Him
 - v. The manger now overflows with Jesus Christ – for day after day, throughout the ages –
 - 1. THE WAY, Jesus Christ, overflows with the water of Holy baptism,
 - 2. overflows with the Body and Blood of Christ given in Holy Communion,
 - 3. and overflows with the precious Word of God which is our daily comfort and hope
- D. Tonight the children tell us the story of Jesus, born in Bethlehem, and laid “away in a manger”
- i. With this story in our hearts, with this Jesus in our souls, He now puts this story on our lips to speak it to those in our families, our friends, and our neighbors
 - ii. With the softest love, and with the greatest compassion, and with the deepest humility – especially to those who have put Jesus “AWAY” in a manger...
 - iii. Tell them about the THE WAY in the manger – who “takes us to heaven to live with thee there”

Conclusion

1. When our children sing “Away in a Manger” – they are not suggesting that we nor they put Jesus “AWAY” in a manger, AWAY from our lives
2. They are speaking boldly about THE WAY in the manger: THE WAY to become God’s children now and forever. Amen.