

1. “Hori” as a Manger - A Symbol of Humility and Sacrifice

The most familiar meaning of the word *hori* in the Bible is *a manger* — a feeding trough for animals such as cows or sheep. This is the context in which we find it in the Nativity story.

Luke 2:7 (ESV):

“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.”

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was not born in a palace or comfortable home, but in a stable, and laid in a feeding trough. This setting was not a mistake. It was a powerful symbol of His mission:

Humility: Philippians 2:6-7 (ESV) says, “Though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant.”

Accessibility: Christ came not just for the rich or powerful but for all people — even the lowest in society.

Sacrifice: His birth in a place where animals are fed hints at His role as the *Lamb of God* who would one day be offered as a sacrifice for sin.

Isaiah 53:5-7 (ESV):

“But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities... like a lamb that is led to the slaughter... so he opened not his mouth.”

The manger foreshadowed the Cross — just as lambs were born to be sacrificed, Jesus was born to die for the sins of the world. His birthplace reflected His purpose: to serve, to suffer, and to save.

2. “Hori” as a Bay - A Geographic Feature in Biblical Lands

The second meaning of *hori* refers to a **bay or inlet** — a curve in a sea or lake where water reaches inland. This geographical usage appears mainly in the Old Testament when describing boundaries of the Promised Land.

Examples:

Joshua 15:5 (ESV):

“And the east boundary is the Salt Sea, to the mouth of the Jordan. And the boundary on the north side runs from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan.”

Joshua 18:19 (ESV):

“Then the boundary passed on to the north side of Beth-hoglah. And the boundary ended at the north bay of the Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan: this was the south boundary.”

Judges 5:17 (ESV):

“Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan; and Dan, why did he stay with the ships? Asher sat still at the coast of the sea, staying by his landings [hori zake - his bays].”

Acts 27:39 (ESV):

“Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned if possible to run the ship ashore.”

This meaning helps us understand the topography of ancient Israel and how bays served as important places for trade, travel, and settlement.

Why the Manger Matters Theologically

The fact that Jesus was born in a manger has deep theological implications:

- **Fulfillment of Prophecy:** His humble beginnings align with messianic prophecies like Micah 5:2, which foretold the Messiah’s birth in the lowly town of Bethlehem.
- **Identification with the Lowly:** Jesus’ birth in a manger shows God’s identification with the poor and marginalized. He didn’t come with royal fanfare but in simplicity and vulnerability.
- **A Foreshadowing of His Death:** Just as the manger was a place where lambs were fed, the Cross was where the Lamb of God would be offered. His birth and death bookend His sacrificial mission.

Conclusion

The Hebrew word *hori* has two meanings in Scripture:

1. **A manger** — symbolizing Christ’s humility and purpose as a sacrificial servant.
2. **A bay or inlet** — describing physical geography used in boundaries and narratives.

Understanding these meanings deepens our appreciation for biblical language and reveals the richness of God’s plan throughout Scripture.

Shalom.

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