

THE LAMB OF GOD BORN IN BETHLEHEM

TEXT: LUKE 2:1-20

Introduction:

1. Christmas is a wonderful time of the year.
2. I was listening to a secular talk radio station the other night and they were playing “Joy to the World.”
3. The talk show host (who is an unsaved Jewish man) said he loved all of the beautiful Christmas songs. Then he made a sarcastic comment about all of the great atheist songs. “Has ha...” said he, “There are no atheistic songs.”
4. This reminds me of the time DL Moody accepted an invitation to debate an atheist. Moody brought a big group of people with him that was saved from wicked sins: immorality, drunkenness, crime, etc. He stood up at the meeting and introduced them, and then said, “Has atheism ever sobered up a drunkard or turned a harlot into a virtuous woman?”
5. Another time Moody told the story of a gentleman who was walking down the street in Baltimore. It was near Christmas-time, and many of the shop windows were filled with Christmas presents, toys, etc. As this gentleman passed he saw three little girls standing before a shop window, and he heard two of them trying to describe to the third the things that were in the window. It aroused the man’s attention, and he wondered what it could mean. He went back, and found that the middle one was blind and that she had never been able to see. Her two sisters were endeavoring to tell her how the pretty presents and toys in the window looked. The gentleman stood beside them for some time, and listened; he said it was most interesting to hear them trying to describe the different articles to the blind child – they found it a difficult task. The man later told the story to DL Moody.

6. Moody said, "As he told me, I said to myself, 'That is just my position in trying to tell other men about Christ: I may talk about Him; and yet they see no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. But if they will only come to Him, He will open their eyes and reveal Himself to them in all His loveliness and grace.'"

I. CHRIST THE LAMB OF GOD

II. CHRIST THE LAMB IS GOD WITH US

III. CHRIST THE LAMB OF GOD IS COMING BACK

I. CHRIST THE LAMB OF GOD

1. We are told in Luke 2:8 that there were "shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."
2. These sheep in the vicinity of Bethlehem were no ordinary sheep. They were sacrificial lambs. In the early spring they would be slaughtered at the Passover.
3. The lamb was the principal animal of sacrifice in the OT worship of God, being the offering each morning and each evening according to the law of Moses (Exodus 29:38, 39).
4. To the Israelites the lamb represented innocence and gentleness. Therefore, the lamb is a perfect picture and type of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
5. The true Christmas story is Christ is the Lamb of God, born in Bethlehem 2000 years ago, in order to die for our sins.
6. God first revealed the Messiah's birth to humble shepherds – shepherds who protected these harmless lambs who would soon die on behalf of sinful men.
7. "Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,

God with us is now residing;
Yonder shines the infant light.”

8. Many people do not believe Jesus was born on December 25th. Modern scholars point out that the sheep were usually brought under cover from November to March.
9. Furthermore, the sheep were not normally in the field “at night.” But there is no real evidence for this. In fact, early Jewish sources suggest that the sheep around Bethlehem were outside all year-round.
10. There really are no legitimate reasons for objecting to the December 25th date for the birth of Jesus.
11. But the actual date is of little importance. Every day, especially every Lord’s Day, we should proclaim that Christ is the Lamb of God.
12. Abraham said to Isaac, “My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering” (Gen. 22:8).
13. The LORD told Moses in Exodus 12:3, “Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house.”
14. And the LORD added, “Your lamb shall be without blemish” (Ex. 12:5).
15. Peter refers to this in I Peter 1:18-20, where he says, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”
16. “Foreordained before the foundation of the world” (I Peter 1:20). Revelation 13:8 says the Lord Jesus Christ is the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

17. Seven hundred years before our Lord's wondrous birth in Bethlehem, and 700 years before He went to the cross to die for our sins, the prophet Isaiah wrote, "he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter" (Isa. 53:7).
18. That remarkable prophecy is quoted several times in the NT. In Acts 8, the angel of the Lord directed Philip to go into the desert "toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza" (Acts 8:26).
19. It was there that Philip met an Ethiopian eunuch, the treasurer for Candace, the queen of Ethiopia. This eunuch had come to Jerusalem to worship, but was now returning, and he was sitting in his chariot reading Isaiah 53 (see Acts 8:26-40).
20. The apostle Paul said in I Corinthians 5:7, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."
21. When John the Baptist saw Christ coming toward him, John said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).
22. When John the Baptist said these words, his hearers understood immediately the significance of what he was saying. These people were Israelites, well versed in the Word of God and in the OT sacrificial system.
23. They had a background going back for centuries and so they quickly grasped the wide sweep and vastness of John's words. To them, a lamb was more than an animal, it was the means that God had provided to make atonement for sin and cleansing.

II. CHRIST THE LAMB IS GOD WITH US

1. Earlier I quoted that great Christmas carol, “Angels From the Realms of Glory.”
2. “Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Watching o’er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
Yonder shines the infant light.”
3. “God with us is now residing...” The world celebrates the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, but few have any comprehension that Jesus is “God with us” (Matthew 1:23).
4. Seven hundred years before Christ, the prophet Isaiah wrote, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6).
5. The apostle Paul wrote, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh” (I Tim. 3:16).
6. The apostle John wrote, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).
7. The apostle Thomas said to Jesus, “My LORD and my God” (John 20:28).
8. God the Father said to Jesus, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom” (Hebrews 1:8).
24. Earlier I mentioned that when John the Baptist’s hearers heard him call Christ “the Lamb of God,” they understood immediately the significance of what he was saying. That is because they were Israelites, and they were familiar with the Word of God and with the OT sacrificial system.
9. In like manner, when the Lord Jesus Christ referred to God as His Father, the Jews knew exactly what He meant. John 5:18 says, “Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.”
10. And when Jesus said unto them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58), they understood what He meant. The

next verse says, “Then took they up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by” (John 8:59).

11. In John 10:30, Jesus told them, “I and my Father are one.” “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him” (John 10:31).
12. God was with them in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. But they rejected the Lamb of God.

III. CHRIST THE LAMB OF GOD IS COMING BACK

1. The Lord Jesus is referred to as “the Lamb” 32 times in the NT, and 28 of those references are in the book of Revelation.
2. In Revelation 6, we see that it is the Lamb of God who will open the seven seals, beginning the tribulation period.
3. In that great day of judgment, sinners will cry out to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:16, 17).
4. It sounds rather incongruous – “the wrath of the Lamb”?
5. And yet we must proclaim that the emphasis in the book of Revelation, and the emphasis throughout the entire Bible, is not just on the wrath of the Lamb, but on the blood of the Lamb.
6. Revelation 1:5 says, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”
7. Revelation 7:14 says, that they which will come out of the great tribulation will have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”
8. “Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”

CONCLUSION:

1. Many years ago, A.C. Dixon was pastoring the Immanuel Baptist Tabernacle in Baltimore, Maryland when his firstborn child died. His son's name was Howard and he was only nine years old.
2. The first Christmas morning after Howard's death was very difficult for Pastor and Mrs. Dixon. Everyone was very quiet and all felt very sad.
3. Finally, one of the young children broke the silence, "This is Howard's first Christmas in heaven!"
4. Another child then added, "I should think it is Christmas every day in heaven." The Lamb of God brought great peace and comfort to that Christian family.
5. *Beloved, Christmas time is a great time to get the true Gospel out. Let's do our part to tell people the true meaning of Christmas!*