

Theme: Lowly, unclean shepherds first heard and saw that the Lamb of God had come and would take away our sins so that all could be restored to God.

## I. Intro - Grandkids and the Story

- A. Young kids love to read the same story over and over
- B. The stories really sink in - Kahlan "The angel on the tree - he shut the lions mouth to save Daniel"
- C. Josh & Owen - Prince of Egypt; reading about Passover
- D. Bugs Bunny on the way to view Christmas lights
- E. Adults can sometimes tragically lose the wonder
- F. So we are rehearsing the story of the Lamb of God

## II. Behold the Lamb of God: OT Roots

- A. Abraham: God Will Provide for Himself A Lamb  
Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together. Genesis 22:8 (ESV)
  - 1. In a world where men sacrificed lambs for their sin, Abraham learned that God will provide for Himself a Lamb to take away our sin
  - 2. If redemption was going to come for this broken world, it would have to be the work of God - not man
  - 3. This established a deep principle in God's people that salvation comes from the Lord and His work, not us and our work
- B. The Passover: When I see the blood I will pass over you  
The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. Exodus 12:13

- 1. The plague of death was to strike Egypt
  - 2. Israel's safety did not lie in her physical lineage, or her own righteousness, but in the protection afforded by the blood of the Passover lamb.
  - 3. Just as God had provided the Lamb for Abraham, so too He provided salvation for Israel through the blood of a spotless lamb
  - 4. This established a deep principle in God's people that deliverance and salvation comes by the blood of the Lamb provided by God - not from our own righteousness and work
- C. The sacrificial system: forgiveness through shed blood  
For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life. Leviticus 17:11
- In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Hebrews 9:22
- 1. The sacrificial system took the principles learned by Abraham and Moses and instituted them as the regular practice of Israel
  - 2. Through the sacrificial system God was providing lambs to be slain so that the blood might cover Israel so that His wrath could pass over them.
  - 3. This cemented the deep principle that salvation comes from blood being shed to atone for sin
  - 4. Salvation came from the blood of the Lamb - not the sweat of our own works

#### D. David: even the best of us need redemption

1. We also saw an episode in the life of David - Israel's greatest King, the founder of the Davidic dynasty, and the head of the Messianic line
2. Yet even this great king - the man after God's own heart - failed miserably. From lofty heights he fell into the depths of depravity and sin.
3. This led to David's great confession of sin in Psalm 51 where he recognizes that his sin problem drove down to the core of his being  
Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Psalms 51:5
  - a. David is recognizing the depth of his own depravity - his sin ran to the depths of his being, and it began at the moment he was conceived
  - b. This is why salvation must come from outside of us - we are too crooked to save ourselves!
4. Crooked deep down (Derek Webb)  
My life looks good I do confess, you can ask anyone  
Just don't ask my real good friends  
Because they will lie to you  
Or worse, they'll tell the truth  
Because there are things you would not believe  
That travel into my mind  
I swear I try and capture them  
But always set em free  
It seems bad things comfort me  
[Chorus:]  
Good lord I am crooked deep down  
Everyone is crooked deep down  
But good lord I am crooked deep down  
Everyone is crooked deep down  
Everyone is crooked deep down

### III. Behold the Lamb of God: NT Realization

- A. Out of this background angels come to the shepherds
  1. The people have seen their need for salvation
  2. But there had been over 400 years of silence
  3. The people languished under the Roman boot
  4. Countless lambs had been slaughtered - and the True Lamb had still not come
  5. The religious leaders often crushed the people under foot - they were more like butchers than shepherds
  6. Had God forgotten His people? Was the lamb really going to come?
- B. The shepherds, the angels, the Lamb
  1. The shepherds  
And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.  
Luke 2:8
    - a. Despite the glorious OT background for shepherds, they were lowly and often despised in Israel at this time
    - b. They were not rich or powerful, nor people of influence
    - c. By rabbinic law, the only sheep in this area were probably intended as lambs to be slaughtered at the Temple
    - d. Ironically, their work of caring for the flock made them unclean according to ceremonial law - they kept the lambs that cleansed, but were unclean by doing so!

## 2. The angels

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Luke 2:9–10

- a. Suddenly, unexpectedly, a mighty angel appeared to these lowly shepherds
- b. He does not come to the rich and powerful in their great palaces, but to lowly shepherds in the field.
- c. They are rightly terrified, but he assures them that he has come with joyous good news - the Gospel!
- d. And this Gospel is not just for them - it is for all people! No one is too low or far removed!

## 3. The Lamb

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Luke 2:11–12

- a. The Gospel - the Savior has been born - and He is God Himself!
- b. He has come to save us - not from the Roman boot, but from sin, Satan, and death!
- c. The sign - you will find the Savior as a Child, lying where the lambs are kept and fed!
- d. The lowly shepherds hear that God has come in a lowly manner - as a helpless Child, not in a display of power; in poverty, not like a king; as a Lamb rather than a lion
- e. The Lamb has come to offer salvation, not just to the rich and powerful but to all. He comes not to save the righteous, but to save sinners!

## IV. Applying the Word - Behold the Lamb!

### A. The story is true - the Lamb has come!

1. The story is true - God has provided for Himself a Lamb - and we are saved!
2. The story is true - death ravages the land because of our sin and rebellion, but God has provided a Passover Lamb - and we are saved!
3. The story is true - even the best of us sin, but the Lamb has come - and we are saved!
4. This is Good News of great joy!

### B. Encouragement for those who feel far from God

1. The announcement that the Lamb had come first came to lowly, despised, lonely shepherds
2. The Lamb comes, not for the righteous, but for we who are crooked deep down!
3. Many of us have experienced the dark night of exile, when God and His promises seem far away
4. Many have experienced the seeming silence of God, when His voice of promise seems far away
5. Look to Him - He has come and brings salvation with Him!
6. Behold the Lamb - and be encouraged!
7. He has come, not for someone else, but for you!

### C. Closing prayer that we might behold the Lamb!

## Where the Lambs Are Kept

Luke 2:8-15

December 18, 2016

Prayer

Luke 2:14

Teaching keywords: Advent and Christmas; biblical characters; Christology; atonement; typology

May there be Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to you on whom his favor rests - through Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. Luke 2:14 paraphrase

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”  
13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” Luke 2:8–15