

**ADVENT SYMBOLS:
The Passover Lamb -- The Lamb of God
John 1:35,36**

TEXT: *The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

What did John the Baptist mean when he pointed to Jesus and declared: *"Look, the Lamb of God!"* With this declaration, John was tying together 1500 years of Old Testament Advent symbolism and connecting it to Jesus: The Passover Lamb died as a symbol of Jesus; and, Jesus died as the Sacrifice for man's sin.

The Passover Lamb had its beginning in 1446 BC when the Lord told Moses: *This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.... The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect... Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs... This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover... "On that same night, I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn-- both men and animals-- and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. 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. "This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD-- a lasting ordinance.* Ex 12 The significance was two-fold: commemorate this day of deliverance and look forward to the deliverance to come.

All this was because 400 years earlier, before the nation of Israel had even become a nation, the Lord had given a sign to Abraham: *Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions.* Ge 15:13. God gave this sign to Abraham so that he and all men might *...Know for certain...* that it is the Lord who is behind this great deliverance. And just as He would deliver Israel from the slavery of the Egyptians, so He would deliver all mankind from the slavery of sin, death and the devil by the blood of the Lamb of God who was yet to come into the world.

How foolish it must have appeared to the Egyptians to see these Hebrews smearing lamb's blood on the doorposts of their homes. How curious they were when they spoke of God bringing a judgment upon Egypt. Why? What had the Egyptians done to deserve such a punishment?

The Egyptians watched and wondered, but few would believe and be saved. But if an ancient Egyptian had asked a Hebrew about why they were slopping lamb's blood on the door frames of their homes and the Hebrew said nothing? Or had mumbled something like: "We've gotta do this because that's just what we are being told to do..."? Would there not have been a missed opportunity to bring the saving truth to that Egyptian?

Our culture today is sanitizing sin with relativity and euphemisms. In terms of relativity, they say: Everyone makes mistakes... God's not going to send me to hell for not going to church... In euphemistic terms, homosexuality is "gay lifestyle" and sex outside of marriage is only having a "date" or having a "significant other."

Sadly, the ungodly have made Christmas a celebration for spiritual sissies, and the modern-day church has helped them. They want to participate in the celebration of Christmas with as much immoral revelry as they can, without paying the price. They think that God winks at sin and would never send anyone to the hell that's described in the Bible. They join us in the observation of Christmas, but are offended with the Good Friday that is yet to come!

People watch and wonder about us. What do we tell them? When gathered together with friends and relatives for the next couple of weeks will there be anyone you know who needs to be told that the real meaning of Christmas is the same as that of the Lenten Season: REPENT! Are there any friends or relatives who would be standing among the ancient Egyptians scoffing at those Hebrews slopping lamb's blood on the doorposts of their homes? Will we not warn them to REPENT and turn to the Baby Jesus with our eye on the cross that

would soon replace his manger bed?

What if John the Baptist would have held his tongue as Jesus walked by that day when he pointed and declared: "**Look, the Lamb of God!**" The ancient Passover Lamb symbolized Jesus who was to be the sacrifice for our sins! How important that was then, and is now, for all to hear and believe!

I like to point out a detail in God's commands regarding the Passover Lamb that has significant application today. The Israelites were commanded to pick a perfect lamb for the sacrifice on the tenth day of the month. God said: **Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.** Do you know what happens when a man brings a little lamb into his household and takes care of it for a few days? That little lamb becomes a family pet. Little lambs are cute and cuddly to children of all cultures. But just as they were becoming attached to the presence of this little lamb for which they were to devote their careful attention, the evening of the 14th day approached when Father then took the new family pet and slaughtered it, and smeared its blood on the doorposts of the house.

This was no sissy religion, nor was it for sissy dads and moms or for sissy children. The lesson was carefully taught: **...the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.** Ro 6:23 They existed as a nation but for one reason: the Savior of mankind was to come from them. They would leave Egypt and go to the land God had promised their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There, in that land, the Savior would be born. There he also would die, as a Sacrifice for the sin of all mankind.

A parallel I see in this Old Testament symbolism is in the four days that the Passover lamb was carefully cared for in those Israelite homes and our modern celebration of Christmas. Just as those Israelites became attached to the little lamb, so everyone gets attached to baby Jesus lying in a manger. Everybody loves Jesus at Christmas time. To the world, this baby born in Bethlehem somehow signifies peace. But unless there is careful instruction, no one will understand that this Baby of Bethlehem is the Lamb of God who was born to die for man's sin.

Because of Jesus, peace is established with God, as the Bible says: **... if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!** Thus, the thing called "repentance." The Bible says: **All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ ...** Thus, the thing we call "Christmas Peace." Then the Bible says: **... and (God) gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.** Thus, like John the Baptist who pointed to Jesus and declared **BEHOLD the Lamb of God**, the bloody Sacrifice for our sins... Like him the Bible says: **We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.** So let our Christmas wishes to all our friends and relatives be that of John and the Apostle Paul who point to Jesus and cry out: **We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.** 2 Co 5

That message may not fit well on a greeting card, to be prepared to tell all you know about this in person! The Advent is a season of repentance, and the Christmas Season is to be celebrated with one eye already on Good Friday. That is the message of the Passover Lamb and Jesus, the Lamb of God. Amen.