

## The Lamb of God

Preachers have spent countless hours preparing for their Christmas Eve sermons over the years. Speaking for myself, and guessing on behalf of other pastors, we have tried to come up with new ways to make an impression on our congregations that will help them appreciate what the birth of Jesus means. I have shared the story of the man who was trying to rescue a flock of birds that had blown into his yard. He wished that he become like them so that he could show them to safety without frightening them. I have talked about the irony of the nature of the birth of Jesus, the king of kings being born to poor parents. I have talked about if you get the chance to visit the traditional location of the manger in Bethlehem, that you have kneel in order to enter the place. You must be on your knees to see where Jesus lay. There is the parallel between the likelihood that the manger was actually chiseled out stone so that

when he was born, he was laid in stone and when he died, he was laid in stone. Thanks to Betty McGee and Lydia Welsh, I have some new insight to share with you. Let's look at Exodus 12: 1 – 6

<sup>1</sup> The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt,

<sup>2</sup> "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat.

<sup>5</sup> The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.

<sup>6</sup> Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. (Exo 12:1-6 NIV)

These are the instructions for preparing the lamb that is to be sacrificed and eaten on Passover. The Passover over lambs were to be separated and keenly inspected for any blemish or sickness. This lamb had to be clean and whole.

In the New Testament from the Gospels to Revelations, the phrase Lamb of God or the Lamb is used 30 times. John 1: 29, and 36 both identify Jesus as the Lamb of God.

We know that Jesus is the Word of God. We know that Jesus is the bread of life and that we are to eat this bread in order to have life. Just to remind ourselves that God has taken into account even the most minor of details, listen to this reading....

God has everything under control and there is nothing that God's opposition can come up with that God has not already thought of and planned for.