

Intro: Only 3 Wednesdays this year; 4th is Christmas Eve. Advent 3 are mine; I've chosen to discuss Lambs. First are associated with Passover. Review; 450 years since 70 w/Joseph. From status of privilege to genocide; boy babies into the Nile. Moses saved, adopted; exiled @ age 40; called by burning bush @ 80. Ten plagues to persuade Pharaoh. Two lambs from that era.

I. SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT OLD TESTAMENT LAMBS

A. Two lamb examples, among many commanded by God

1. Passover lamb is better known
 - a. yearling w/o blemish
 - b. kill it; put blood on doorpost and lintel
 - c. roast, eat; burn leftovers
 - d. God will kill firstborn, man and beast, M and F
 - e. catastrophic result in Egypt; **all** begged Israel to leave (they did)
2. second lamb lesser known; next chapter (13)
 - a. "Sanctify to Me all the firstborn, man or animal"
 - b. firstborn are Mine, says God
 - c. you therefore have to 'redeem' the sons
 - d. Lev. 12 adds daughters (66 days) as well as sons (40 days)
 - e. " also allows poor to use 2 pigeons or doves instead of lamb

B. What each reminded the Israelites

1. Passover lamb gave its life to free enslaved Israelites
 - a. the people were helpless to save themselves
 - b. God took the initiative, called (Moses), invited
 - c. God intimated they'd forget, get complacent in new land
2. 'firstborn' lamb had a more subtle message
 - a. God singles out 'firstborn'
 - b. historically, he carried on the inheritance lineage
 - c. and more; firstborn is Mine, God's possession (more on this)

II. SO, WHY LAMBS DURING ADVENT

A. One lamb foretold a special 'firstborn' Who was to come

1. both Matthew and Luke trace ancestry lineage of Jesus of Nazareth
(continued)

2. Luke (2) says "she brought forth her **firstborn** Son and laid Him..."
3. all this lamb stuff is about **Jesus**
4. God says, This is my beloved Son; w/o blemish; holy
5. BTW, Joseph offered 2 doves (Luke 2:24)

B. One lamb foretold a life-giving sacrifice

1. a lot of Egyptians died because of no blood on doorposts
2. Jesus' obedience fulfilled all God's Old Testament requirements
3. Matthew 5:17 Think not that I came to destroy...to fulfill
4. so He could say from the cross, "It is finished"
5. Jesus' offering of Himself fulfils all God's demands vs. sins
6. The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sins
7. all those O.T. lambs were God's Advent sermon
8. God's sacrificial Son was coming to Israel

III. WHY ALL OF THIS MATTERS STILL TODAY

A. Since Jesus came, no more sacrificial lambs are required

1. dead sheep don't forgive sins; inadequate price
2. God used these rituals to teach His people
3. taught Israel to look for promised Savior from sin's slavery
4. they, and we, too easily get complacent, comfortable
5. e.g., we are **way** too lazy about reading up on God's promises

B Jesus is still coming

1. this can be understood in two ways, by my design
2. (1) ingressive present tense (it is raining)
3. (2) or simple future tense (something is coming)
4. I like purple paraments (penitence)
5. Jesus came 2,000 years ago to redeem the world's sins
6. 1 John 1:8-9 The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us...
7. He is coming to us with forgiveness in words and sacraments
8. He will come again to end the world with judgment
9. He'll come that final time to reunite souls and resurrected bodies of
of all those who confess Him to be Redeemer and Savior

CONCLUSION: No more Passover lambs or first-born offerings. Jesus has come to Bethlehem and to Calvary to pay the all-sufficient price for the sins of the world. And He will come one more time. Wait for it. AMEN