

Lessons from Lambs

“Behold the Lamb of God!”

John 1:36

Introduction:

1. As urban Americans in 2016, we are very ignorant of the nature of lambs and sheep and their use.
2. The Jews that heard John the Baptist in A.D. 26 were intimately familiar with all aspects of them.
3. The traits outlined here may apply more to sheep than to lambs, but we use lambs representatively.
4. During the 1500+ years of Israel under Moses Law, the Jews slaughtered about 400 million lambs.
5. Jesus submitted meekly and quietly to the rage of enemies and was slaughtered for us at Calvary.
6. The preacher and author here has long intended a study of lambs/sheep and field trip to see them.
7. There are many other more insignificant lessons that could be brought than those written below.
8. Lambs, sheep, flocks, and shepherds are seen from the earliest Bible chapters to the last chapter.
9. This sermon study involved reviewing about 850 references to lambs, sheep, flocks, shepherds, etc.

Miscellaneous Facts:

1. Raising sheep is one of the oldest industries we know of by the Bible and human history (Abel).
2. Sheep were first used for meat, skins, milk, and wool; it makes the best leather like lambskin jackets.
3. The world has over 1 billion sheep in 900 breeds; China has the most; California has the most here.
4. Americans eat 87 pounds of chicken, 65 of beef, 51 of pork, 17 of turkey, but only 1.1 of lamb.
5. Sheep in America are 1/8 of what they were, due to synthetic threads and promotion of other meats.
6. Wool is durable, insulating, wrinkle and fire resistant, moisture-absorbing, but declining (Job 31:20).
7. Sheep are shorn annually; a year’s growth is 8 lbs. of wool; one pound can make 10 miles of yarn.
8. The best known cheese to Americans from sheep milk is feta, though sometimes with cow milk.
9. Lamb meat is called just that, *lamb*; meat from a grown sheep outside the first year is called *mutton*.
10. George Washington raised them at Mt. Vernon; Woodrow Wilson’s grazed the White House lawn.
11. Sheep are animals over one year of age; lambs are animals less than a year; yearlings are 1-2 years.
12. The life expectancy is 6-11 years; the mature weight for female ewes 90-300 lbs., males 150-400.
13. Sheep produce milk; other nations drink it; the Bible lists it; it makes gourmet cheese (Deut 32:14).
14. Weight at birth varies by breed, sex, birth number, etc., but they are close to human babies (5-8 lbs.).
15. Gestation is about five months or 150 days as opposed to human gestation of 9 months or 39 weeks.
16. A female sheep is a ewe; a male is a ram or buck; a castrated male is a wether; the young are lambs.
17. Puberty is around 8 months for both rams and ewes; breeding is 1-2 times a year, with 1-3 in litters.
18. Sheep are ruminants with a four-chamber stomach using bacteria to assist breaking down their food.
19. They only have lower teeth to press against their upper palette; their field of vision is 300+ degrees.
20. If on their back, they cannot get up and must be helped up, or else they could die within an hour.
21. Healthy lambs can stand within minutes after birth and can move with the flock almost immediately.
22. They have good memories and can recall at least 50 individual sheep and humans faces for years.
23. More sheep facts ... https://www.famu.edu/cesta/main/assets/File/coop_extension/small%20ruminant/goat%20pubs/Sheep%20Facts.pdf
24. More sheep facts and sheep husbandry information may be obtained at many websites and videos.

JESUS Is the Lamb of God

- A. John will declare this same name/title for Jesus Christ the next day as well (Jn 1:36).
 1. There is not a single occurrence of *lamb* in any of the other three gospel accounts.
 2. There is not a single occurrence of *lamb* in all the epistles of beloved brother Paul.
 3. The eunuch read Isaiah 53:7 in Acts 8:32; Peter used a simile once (I Peter 1:19).
 4. John used *Lamb of God* as a name and title for Jesus twice here (John 1:29,36).

5. He used *Lamb* 28 times in Revelation (Re 5:6,8,12,13; 6:1,16; 7:9,10,14,17; 12:11; 13:8,11; 14:1,4,10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7,9; 21:9,14,22,23,27; 22:1,3).
6. John loved this name and title, and he saw His Lord as such in heaven (Rev 5:6).
- B. Jesus Christ is not the Lamb of God in several respects that we should rule out first.
 1. Jesus is not the Lamb for any hurtful fear, helplessness, or intimidation on His part.
 2. Jesus is not the Lamb for being a follower of any rather than our Head and Leader.
 3. Jesus is not the Lamb only; He was also identified in heaven as a Lion (Rev 5:5).
- C. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God in several respects we should delight and rejoice in.
 1. He is the Lamb for being the docile, humble sacrifice put to death by others.
 2. He is the Lamb for his meek and quiet submission to a brutal death (Is 53:7).
 3. If God clothed Adam and Eve with lambskin, Jesus fulfilled it (Gen 3:31).
 4. Jesus fulfilled the implied lamb that Abraham and Isaac needed (Ge 22:7-8).
 5. Jesus fulfilled the Passover lamb that delivered Israel, which was an annual family ritual with personal and significant meaning (Ex 12:1-28,43-51).
 6. Jesus fulfilled the morning and evening lamb of Israel (Num 28:3-8); the interruption of these daily sacrifices was very serious (Dan 8:11-12; 12:11).
 7. Jesus fulfilled the Sabbath lambs offered every seven days (Num 28:9-10).
 8. Jesus fulfilled the seven lambs offered to start every month (Num 28:11-15).
 9. Jesus fulfilled the seven lambs offered daily during Passover (Nu 28:16-25).
 10. Jesus fulfilled the seven lambs offered for feast of firstfruits (Nu 28:26-31).
 11. Jesus fulfilled the only Messianic Psalm specifically identifying this replacement of all sacrifices required by Moses (Ps 40:6-8; Heb 10:1-10).
 12. For the Passover lamb ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/christ-our-passover.2.pdf>.

Jesus Fulfilled the Passover Lamb

- A. By far the largest number of lambs slain in Israel for 1500 years was for the Passover.
- B. Israel recalled God's death angel passing over their firstborn when seeing the blood.
- C. Paul explained that Jesus was sacrificed to save us like the lamb for them (I Cor 5:7).
- D. Jesus fulfilled the Passover lamb in many different ways as antitype of the shadow.
- E. For much more about the Passover ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/christ-our-passover.2.pdf>.

The Book of Life is the Lamb's

- A. The book of life, with the names of elect be redeemed, is Christ's (Rev 13:8; 21:27).
- B. Jesus was slain to put God's covenant of grace into effect, or no man could be saved.

Lambs Are Silent When Sheared or Slaughtered

- A. Isaiah gave this prophecy of Jesus meekly and quietly going to the cross (Isaiah 53:7).
- B. It was this Bible passage that Philip was able to explain to the eunuch (Acts 8:30-35).
- C. Lambs and sheep will allow themselves to be both fleeced or killed without fighting.
- D. This is very different from most other animals that will put up much fight and noise.
- E. Jesus did not revile or threaten those that tortured Him before crucifixion (I Pet 2:23).
- F. We are to have this spirit in the world, especially under cruel bosses (I Peter 2:20-23).

Lamb for Isaac

- A. As Abraham led Isaac to Moriah, he asked his father where was the lamb (Gen 22:7).
- B. Abraham told him God would provide Himself a lamb ... creative wording (Ge 22:8).
- C. God gave a ram caught in a thicket for Abraham to offer instead of Isaac (Gen 22:13).

Lambs Redeemed Asses

- A. God did not want asses on His altar, so they were saved by lambs (Ex 13:13; 34:20).
- B. This was God's ordinance for unclean animals that opened the matrix (Nu 18:15-17).
- C. For a human application of such redemption ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/redemption.pdf>.

A Sucking Lamb

- A. When Israel feared the Philistines, Samuel burnt a whole sucking lamb (I Samuel 7:9).
- B. God delivered them by thunder, so Samuel called the place Ebenezer (I Samuel 7:12).
- C. We sing about Ebenezer in the spiritual song, *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*.

Surprised Shepherds

- A. Shepherds watching over sheep by night heard a great announcement (Luke 2:8-14).
- B. They were the first to see the Lord Christ and publish the great news (Luke 2:15-20).

Jesus Is More than a Lamb

- A. When John viewed heaven, he wept that no man was found to open the book (Re 5:4).
- B. He was comforted that the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, had prevailed (Rev 5:5).
- C. When John saw this Lion, He appeared as a Lamb slain, thus mortal wounds (Re 5:6).
- D. This scene in Revelation 5 is of Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven to be crowned.
- E. For more on this scene of Christ's ascension ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/christ-in-glory.pdf>.

Jesus Is the Good Shepherd

- A. John 10 sets forth Jesus as a good Shepherd far superior to the Pharisees and others.
- B. Those religious ministers that come by other means or goals are thieves and robbers.
- C. Sheep know a shepherd by his voice they hear daily and will follow, but not strangers.
- D. Jesus came for the sheep to have abundant life rather than to steal, kill, and destroy.
- E. Hirelings, day laborers for wages, do not care for sheep like a shepherd owning them.
- F. Jesus is such a good Shepherd that He lays down His life for His sheep to save them.
- G. We are the sheep of Jesus by God's election and gift of us to Him (John 10:16,26-29).
- H. Jesus as Shepherd was a prophecy of the Old Testament, as Micah saw (Micah 5:1-4).
- I. The Son of David had great example in David (Ps 78:70-72; Ezek 34:23; 37:23-24).
- J. For a detailed exposition of John 10 ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/jesus-the-good-shepherd.pdf>.

One Lost Lamb Is Worth It

- A. Lamb loss, mortality today is 20% before weaning, is a costly matter of having sheep.
- B. Once a lamb lives past weaning, losing it is an expensive event to avoid if possible.
- C. Jesus described His love of sinners to a shepherd leaving 99 to find 1 lost (Lu 15:1-7).

- D. As faithful shepherds rejoice, so heaven's angels rejoice over one sinner that repents.
- E. A song and its story, *There Were Ninety-and-Nine* ... <https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/1077>.
- F. Sung by Ira D. Sankey ... <http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=97081010204>.

Jesus is the Great Shepherd

- A. Paul's conclusion to Hebrews includes a benediction that is glorious (Heb 13:20-21).
- B. Jesus is the great shepherd of the sheep due to the blood of the everlasting covenant.
- C. His shed blood ratified the last will and testament and put it into force (Heb 9:15-17).

Jesus is the Chief Shepherd

- A. Peter exhorted fellow elders to faithfulness by virtue of His faithfulness (I Pet 5:1-4).
- B. Every pastor and teacher is only an under-shepherd, serving the Lord and His sheep.
- C. The flock of God's elect in local churches is to be fed rather than lorded over by men.
- D. Faithful ministers will receive a crown of glory regardless of their popularity on earth.

God as Shepherd

- A. Jesus is clearly a significant Shepherd, but so was Jehovah God to Israel (Psalm 23).
- B. He is seen in the gospel, but there is a nearer fulfillment – Cyrus (Isaiah 40:11; 44:28).
- C. The theme is common (Gen 49:24; Ps 74:1; 78:52; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3; Is 63:11; Jer 13:17,20; 31:10; Ezek 34:12-14,23,31; 36:37-38; Mic 7:14; Zech 9:16; Lu 12:32).
- D. God employs men to convey His word, but He is superintending Shepherd (Ec 12:11).
- E. No earthly shepherd, even kings, can stand against this God (Jer 49:19; 50:44; 51:23).

Lambs Easily Wander Astray

- A. Isaiah compared us sinners to wandering sheep, seeking our own way in life (Is 53:6).
- B. David admitted and confessed that he had gone astray like a lost sheep (Ps 119:176).
- C. Lambs are not too intelligent and will wander away not knowing the danger they face.
- D. They must be kept in sheepfolds or hedges or rounded up by sheep dogs or shepherds.
- E. Peter confirmed the analogy and applied it to us, identifying our Shepherd (I Pet 2:25).

Lambs in the World

- A. Our Lord sent His apostles to preach the gospel as lambs among wolves (Luke 10:3).
- B. Similar to lambs, Jesus charged His apostles to be gentle as doves (Matt 10:16,22).
- C. He told them that as the world had hated Him it would also hate them (Jn 15:18-25).
- D. The record of the martyrs, including Jesus and Stephen, is thus (Luke 23:34; Ac 7:60).

Lambs for Slaughter

- A. Paul comforted believers in Rome with a prophecy of slaughter of sheep (Ro 8:36-37).
- B. David had written much earlier about the persecutions of God's people (Ps 44:11,22).
- C. Jeremiah testified that he was treated by the Jews like a lamb for slaughter (Jer 11:19).
- D. True followers of Jesus Christ will suffer persecution for godliness (II Timothy 3:12).

Lambs in the Church

- A. Jesus taught Peter for ministry by telling him to feed lambs and sheep (Jn 21:15-17).
- B. Every reference to shepherds or flocks is about it (Ac 20:28-29; I Cor 9:7; I Pet 5:2-3).
- C. Ministers must remember not to overdrive the sheep, for they are better led than beat.

Lambs and Wolves Together

- A. Isaiah foretold when lambs and wolves would dwell together (Is 11:1-10; 63:17-25).
- B. The context clearly shows this took place at the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- C. God's grace and the gospel alter men's conduct to where former enemies eat together.
- D. Think of the glorious peace as Paul assembled at Jerusalem (Ac 9:26-28; Ga 1:21-24).
- E. It is a very carnal mind that rather likes zookeepers breaking down fences and cages!

Lambs without Shepherds

- A. Jesus grieved over scattered sheep without shepherds, meaning pastors (Matt 9:36-38).
- B. Long before, Moses had begged God for a replacement for himself (Num 27:15-17).
- C. A Jewish mob took Jesus, so His apostles were scattered sheep (Zec 13:7; Mat 26:31).
- D. Micaiah prophesied this of Israel by way of foretelling Ahab's death (I Kings 22:17).
- E. God told of evil shepherds (Ezek 34:1-31; Jer 10:21; 23:1-40; 50:6; Zec 10:3; 11:3-9).
- F. Israel would be scattered without a shepherd (Jer 50:17), but they survived (Mic 5:8).
- G. He foretold foolish and idol shepherds as Jewish priests or man of sin (Zec 11:15-17).

Sheep or Goat

- A. When Jesus comes to judge all men, He will separate sheep and goats (Mat 25:31-46).
- B. The sheep will be identified as those who loved the least of His brethren on the earth.
- C. The goats will be those who did not love His brethren for His sake in their selfishness.
- D. The sheep will inherit their eternal kingdom, and the goats will go into eternal fire.
- E. You are a sheep or goat by God's choice, and faith is merely evidence (Jn 10:26-29).
- F. Gospel preachers only feed sheep; they do not turn goats into sheep (John 21:15-17).

Wolves in Sheep's Clothing

- A. Jesus warned false prophets would sneak in to eat the flock (Mat 7:15-20; Jn 10:1,10).
- B. Evil pastors was a O.T. theme (Is 56:10-11; Eze 22:25; Mic 3:5; Zec 13:4; Zep 3:3-4).
- C. Jesus warned these false teachers would deceive His people (Matt 23:14; 24:5,11,24).
- D. Paul warned the same would occur in the N.T. (Ac 20:29-31; II Co 11:13-15; Ga 2:4).
- E. Peter and Jude warned of false teachers sneaking heresy in (II Peter 2:1-3, Jude 1:4).

Slaughter of Lambs

- A. The LORD prophesied of destroying many nations by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 25:34-38).
- B. The LORD prophesied of destroying Babylon like slaughtering lambs (Jer 51:40).
- C. In a connected passage, destroying Chaldea was like slaying bullocks (Jer 50:27).
- D. Jeremiah used the slaughter of sheep as his prayer against the wicked (Jeremiah 12:3).
- E. Jehovah also used this language describing destruction of Edom (Isaiah 34:5-8).

F. Jehovah also used creative language to describe judgment of Israel (Amos 3:12).

Fat of Lambs

- A. Lamb fat burning in a sacrifice pictured God's judgment of the wicked (Psalm 37:20).
- B. Ever watch bacon grease catch on fire and blaze up in hasty destruction? You grasp it!
- C. Our God is a consuming fire; He burns up enemies (Matt 3:10-12; 22:7; Heb 12:29).

Lambs Require Business Analysis

- A. Lambs were for clothing, so Solomon warned to know your business (Prov 27:23-27).
- B. Lambs were for clothing, a basic essential, so even kings had to pay attention to them.
- C. Every business and industry has challenges or threats to be wisely seen and thwarted.
- D. You cannot rest on present job security and cash flow without regard to the future.
- E. Proverbs 27:26 commentary ... http://www.letgodbetruer.com/proverbs/commentaries/27_26.php.

Prosperity Is By God's Blessing

- A. David prayed that God would bless Israel the church with fertile sheep (Ps 144:13).
- B. Abraham and Hezekiah were blessed for obedience to God (Gen 24:35; II Chr 32:29).
- C. Moses promised Israel blessing of fertile sheep for their obedience (Deut 7:13; 28:18).
- D. Job ended up with twice as much as before, 14k sheep instead of 7k (Job 1:3; 42:12).
- E. Jacob's rods at watering troughs are doubtful; God is not (Gen 30:36-40; 31:11-13).
- F. Disobedience would bring God destroying flocks (Deut 28:18,51; Ps 78:48; Jer 5:17).

Skipped like Lambs

- A. The mountains of Sinai skipped like rams and lambs at God's presence (Ps 114:4,6).
- B. There was a whole lot of shaking going on when God gave His fiery law (Ex 19:18).
- C. Also, God's people should dance like rams and lambs (II Sam 6:14; Hab 3:17-19).
- D. This author's mother used to tell of her childhood running and skipping with lambs.
- E. See skipping (gamboling) lambs ... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7un77dJP3Q>.
- F. More skipping and jumping lambs ... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29SHwDRRYNk>.
- G. More skipping and jumping lambs ... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKkkNtoSKS4>.

Conclusion:

1. If God clothed Adam and Eve with lambskin, Jesus fulfilled this lamb as well, even if only typical.
2. This sermon study involved reviewing over 800 references to lambs, sheep, flocks, shepherds, etc.
3. Greater knowledge of lambs and sheep should help us better appreciate our Lord's sacrifice for us.
4. Greater knowledge of lambs and sheep should help us better fulfill our walk with God in this world.
5. May we more perfectly understand our relationship to God for greater appreciation and faithfulness.

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, "John 10 – The Good Shepherd" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/jesus-the-good-shepherd.pdf>.
2. The sermon outline, "Jesus Christ our Passover" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/christ-our-passover.2.pdf>.
3. The sermon outline, "Redemption through His Blood" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/redemption.pdf>.
4. The sermon outline, "Revelation 5 – Christ in Glory" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/christ-in-glory.pdf>.