

Mary Had a Little Lamb

Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC

December 1, 2024

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Text: Matthew 1:18-25

Purpose: God sent His only Son as the Lamb of God for the world. Mary's child was a special and sacrificial Lamb.

I believe many people grew up learning the children's poem entitled "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

Mary Had a Little Lamb by Sarah Hale



Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow;
And everywhere that Mary went,
The lamb was sure to go.
He followed her to school one day;
That was against the rule;
It made the children laugh and play;
To see a lamb at school.
And so the teacher turned it out,
But still it lingered near,
And waited patiently about
Till Mary did appear.
"Why does the lamb love Mary so?"
The eager children cry;
"Why, Mary loves the lamb, you know,"
The teacher did reply.

I Am Jesus' Little Lamb

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He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart. Is. 40:11

1. I am Je - sus' lit - tle lamb, ev - er glad at heart I am;
2. Day by day, at home, a - way, Je - sus is my staff and stay.
3. Who so hap - py as I am, e - ven now the Shep - herd's lamb?

for my Shep - herd gent - ly guides me, knows my need, and well pro - vides me,
When I hun - ger, Je - sus feeds me, in - to pleas - ant pas - tures leads me;
And when my short life is end - ed, by his an - gel host at - tend - ed,

loves me ev - 'ry day the same, e - ven calls me by my name.
when I thirst, he bids me go where the qui - et wa - ters flow,
he shall fold me to his breast, there with - in his arms to rest.

Henrietta L. von Hayn, 1778

WEIL ICH JESU SCHÄFLEIN BIN 7.7.8.8.7.7.
Brüder Choral-Buch, 1784

From what I have read about the origin of this poem, this actually happened a long time ago when a girl by the name of Mary allowed her pet lamb to come to school. When you sang this song as a child, you had no idea that something like that had actually happened. Maybe it never occurred to you, that that same poem could apply to a young girl named Mary who gave birth to a little boy that would be called the Lamb of God.



Well, that's what is happening in these verses we read a few minutes ago in the Gospel of Matthew. Joseph was engaged to a young Jewish girl named Mary. They were betrothed, which means that they were legally bound to each other, but they had not gotten married and they were not yet living together. During this time, word came to Joseph that Mary was pregnant. Joseph knows that he isn't the father, but he is sure someone is! He believes that Mary has been unfaithful to him and he decides to break off the engagement (v. 18-19). Yet, because he loves Mary, he wants to do this thing quietly because the harsh penalty for committing adultery was death by stoning.



Before Joseph can put his plan into action of sending Mary away, God sends an angel to tell Joseph in a dream what is really happening with Mary. He tells this Jewish man that Mary is carrying a child that was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit of God. He is told that this child will be a special child with a special mission. This child is to be the Savior of the world.

Joseph's reaction is to accept Mary as his wife. I don't think either one quite realized how special this child was going to be. This baby boy was none other than the Lamb of God who would one day die for the sins of all people. Verse 25 tells us that Mary delivered this child. When she did, the Lamb of God was born. All of the scriptures are centered on the Lamb of God which Mary gave birth to. Mary's Lamb was special and one day would become the sacrificial Lamb of God.



May God help us understand this day, why Jesus and His birth is so special.

I. Mary's Lamb was a Special Lamb (v. 20)

A. Jesus' Conception was Special



This baby that was born to Mary was special in many ways. The first way Jesus was special was in the way He was conceived. So many atheists and agnostics stumble on the message the angel gave Joseph and Mary. They scoff at the idea of a virgin birth.



But the scripture affirms the fact that Jesus had no human father! His Father is God Himself! What makes the conception of Jesus so fantastic was that He was born to a virgin! Now we all know the traditional way a baby is conceived and brought into the world. However, the situation with Jesus is completely different. We read in Isaiah 7:14,

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

Through the years some have superimposed their denial of the virgin birth of Christ by translating this passage to say a “*young girl*” shall be found to be with child, instead of a “*virgin*.” (You will find this phrase in the RSV translation.) In my opinion there is nothing extraordinary about a “*young girl*” giving birth. It happened every day during Jesus’ day and it happens in our day as well. What was special about Mary’s situation was that she found herself pregnant and a virgin. The prophecy found in Isaiah 7:14 was one of the first of hundreds to be fulfilled during Jesus’ lifetime.

We need to understand how important the doctrine of the faith is. Without a virgin birth, we do not have a sinless Savior. The only way Jesus could have the nature of His Father (God) was for God Himself to be His Father. For Jesus to be the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, He needed to be a sinless, perfect sacrifice. If we reject the truth about the virgin birth, we are eroding the sinless nature of Christ. If Jesus wasn’t virgin born, then He is no different than you and I are. I don’t want a Savior just like I am, I need a sinless Savior.

B. Jesus’ Conduct was Special

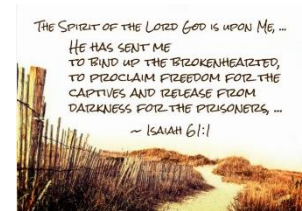
Not only was Jesus’ conception special, His life and conduct as special. From the day Jesus came into this world until the day He ascended back into Heaven, He was a person with very special characteristics.

Jesus’ Conduct was Special in His Miracles

When Jesus began His public ministry around the age of 30, He began by turning water into wine. He began to open blind eyes, touch and heal the sick, feed over 5000 with only 5 loaves of bread and two fish. He walked on water, stilled a violent storm on the Sea of Galilee. He even raised people that were once dead. Everything He did pointed out that He was special. It was proof to everyone that He was who He claimed to be.



When Jesus first entered the temple and read from the scrolls, He read the passage found in Isaiah 61:1 which said,



“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.”

Jesus came to do this and much more.

Jesus’ Conduct was Special in His Messages.

Not only through His actions did Jesus prove who He was, it was also in His teaching. When Jesus opened His mouth, even the most learned people of Jesus’ day sat astonished at the wisdom of a 12-year-old boy. (Luke 2:47). When He began to cover the Judean



countryside, He continued to amaze the crowds as He spoke. It was said, “*No one ever spoke as Jesus spoke.*”

Jesus’ Conduct was Special in His Methods

Even in the way Jesus conducted Himself, He set Himself apart from others. He didn’t stoop to the level of His enemies. He always kept himself focused on doing the will of God. Jesus could have made Himself an earthly King. The crowds wanted Him, but Jesus was only focused on the things that mattered to God and everything He did was directly related to pleasing His Heavenly Father. (John 8:29)

There has never been another person like Jesus – nor will there ever be!

Jesus was one of a kind – Mary’s special Lamb.

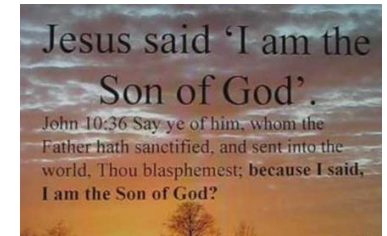
C. Jesus’ Claim was Special

Not only was Jesus’ conception and conduct special, thirdly, His claim was also special.

Jesus was not shy about telling people Who He was. In fact, it was His claims that caused the Jewish leaders to seek His death. What exactly did Jesus’ claim about Himself that would cause the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes to take such offense? There are two specific claims that enraged them.

Jesus Claimed to Be the Son of God (John 10:36)

One of the first claims that Jesus made was that He was the Son of God. In John 10, Jesus is involved in a war of words with the Jewish leaders. Jesus said, “*I am the Son of God.*” The religious leaders immediately sought to seize Him and kill Him, but He slipped out of their hands.



This claim of Jesus being the Son of God is just as central to the nature and person of Christ as is the fact that His mother was a virgin. If you deny that Jesus is the Son of God then you are essentially denying God. Until a person is willing to confess Jesus to be the Son of God, they cannot be saved!

Jesus Claimed to Be God (John 8:58, 10:30, 14:9)

Jesus also took His claim of being a Son of God to actually being God. These words of Jesus were even more offensive to the Jewish leaders. By making this claim, Jesus was telling them that He was eternal, that He was their God, and they needed to bow before Him and acknowledge Him as their God. This they were not willing to do!

In John 8:58, Jesus said, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.*”

In John 10:30 He said, “*I and My Father are one.*”

In John 14:8 He said, “*He who has seen Me has also seen the Father.*”

These are incredible claims of Christ. As C.S. Lewis once said, *“Either Jesus is the Son of God or He is a liar and a lunatic.”* Jesus proved by His words, actions and deeds, that He was Who He claimed to be.

Those that accept this truth about Jesus Christ, that He is God in the flesh, can be saved! John reminds us that if we believe on Jesus we will be saved.

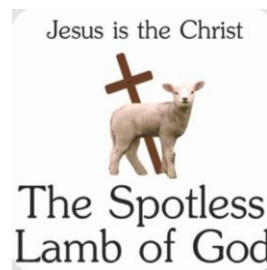
II. Mary’s Lamb was a Sacrificial Lamb

Mary’s little Lamb came into this world for one purpose. It was not to walk on water, it was not to heal sick folks, it was not to open blinded eyes, and it was not to calm storms. Jesus came for the sole purpose of dying! He was a special Lamb, but He came to be the sacrificial Lamb. You see, Jesus came to die for the sins of humanity.

Luke tells us that His mission in this world was *“to seek and to save that which was lost.”* (Luke 19:10). If He was going to accomplish this, there was a price that had to be paid, and He paid that price when He went to the cross and died for our sins. There are three thoughts concerning this sacrificial Lamb.

Jesus was a Spotless Lamb

Jesus was a **Spotless Lamb**. Before any lamb could be offered as a sacrifice, it had to be examined thoroughly by a priest and declared spotless. (Num. 28:9) An animal that was impure or deformed could not be offered. For Jesus to be the sacrifice for our sins, He had to be a perfect specimen. He had to be a human without spot or blemish.



Jesus filled this bill perfectly. Not only was He the Son of God, but He was the sinless Son of God (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22). When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He was shedding innocent blood. He was dying in the place of all the guilty sinners who had ever and would ever live. He was a pure Lamb dying for a wretched world.

Jesus was a Submissive Lamb

Jesus was a **Submissive Lamb**.

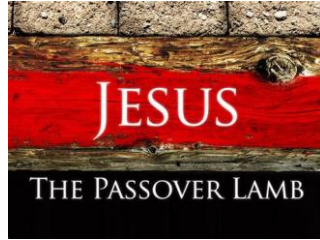
Jesus wasn’t forced into His role as a sacrifice. He willingly submitted to all that He endured. He did it all out of a heart of love for you and me. Remember, Jesus was God in the flesh! This is the Creator of the universe that we are talking about. He could have called down 12 legions of angels had He wanted to. (Matt. 26:53). He could have spoken the word and His executioners and accusers would have vanished away into nothingness. He could have expressed the thought and everything would have been no more! But He didn’t!

Instead, He endured the shame and the pain without uttering a word. He submitted to the Father’s will and paid the price for sin. Isaiah 53:7 reminds us that the Lamb of God would be a submissive Lamb. When He did speak, it was to pray for the forgiveness of His tormentors and executioners. Jesus was fully surrendered to the Father’s will. Even in the Garden of Gethsemane when the cross was still hours away Jesus could be found in prayer calling for the Father’s will to be done (Luke 22:42).



Jesus was a Sacrificed Lamb

He was a **Sacrificed Lamb**. All the rest meant nothing unless this part was fulfilled. It wasn't enough for Jesus to be sinless and surrendered.

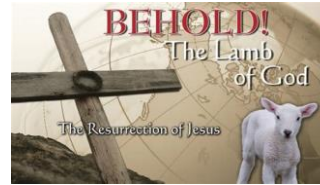


He had to suffer and die before sin could ever be done away with (Heb. 9:22). Thank God, on that cross, Jesus paid the price for our sins and literally became sin for you and me that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him! They took the Lord Jesus outside the city of Jerusalem, nailed Him to a cross, and there He died for your sins and mine! When that blood was pouring from His body and His life was ebbing away, it was as if a giant billboard advertising the awesome love of God had been erected for all sinners to see (Rom. 5:8).

In a small Oriental town several men were working on a scaffold high above the street. Suddenly one of them lost his footing and fell to the pavement below. Horrified, his fellow workers quickly descended, expecting to find his body broken and mangled. To their surprise they discovered that their friend was unhurt! At the exact moment of his fall some sheep were passing through the street beneath him, and he had landed on the back of one of the animals. There the sheep lay, crushed and dead, but the man was saved. As he gazed upon that lifeless creature, he was heard to say, "That lamb died for me!"

Jesus, the Lamb of God, died for me and you.

III. Mary's Lamb is a Saving Lamb



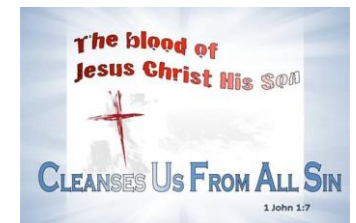
Not only is Mary's Lamb **Special** and **Sacrificial**, He is also a **Saving Lamb**.

If the story of Jesus' life ended on the cross, it would be a sad story to tell. There would be no reason to celebrate Christmas and no need to come to church. There would be no salvation and no hope for our souls. If He died and that was the end of Him, that would be the end of us as well. But, thank God, the story doesn't end there! Three days after Jesus died on that cross, He came forth, alive, from the grave! (Matt. 28:1-6). And, He is still alive today. (Heb. 7:25) Since this is true, I want to show you what the Lamb of God, Mary's little Lamb can do today.

Jesus Has the Power to Save Sinners

Jesus has the power to save sinners. Those who are lost in sin have hope today! They can turn to the Lord Jesus and He WILL save their soul! There are three things that Jesus will do in the heart and life of every sinner that will come to Him by faith.

First, He cleanses us from sin. His blood has the power to wash away sins forever! (Psalm 103:12; 1 John 1:7). When you put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and accept His death and resurrection as the payment for your sin debt, He washes you in His blood and your sins are no longer an issue!



Secondly, He converts our souls. The human soul is a wicked thing (Jer. 17:9). It is lost and undone and cannot have fellowship with God. However, when a sinner trusts Jesus for salvation, Jesus takes that life that was so far away from God and brings it near to God. (Eph. 2:12-13)



When Jesus does His saving work in your soul, He makes you pleasing in the sight of God and allows you to enter into a special relationship with God. When you are saved, you become a child of God. (1 John 3:1-2) You are no longer corrupt and doomed to Hell, but in Jesus you are saved and are brought into a close relationship with the Father above!

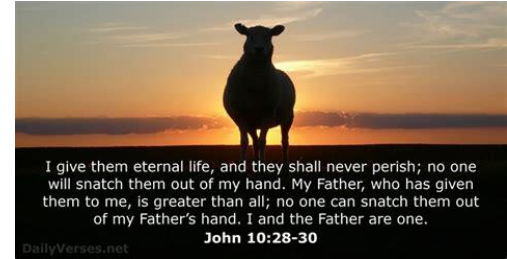
Thirdly, God gives us a new nature. When God saves someone, He also changes that person. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”* We have heard this verse many times. Some of you might even be able to quote it. However, the truth needs to be understood by everyone here this morning. If you are saved, you have been changed! You cannot be like you were before you met Jesus. Everything has changed and can never be the same again! If we are fully yielded and obedient believers, then Jesus can take the worst of sinners and turn them into the best saints. (2 Cor . 4:7).



Jesus Has the Power to Secure the Saints

Once we have accepted Jesus as our Savior, then our eternity is secure. Those who come to Mary's little Lamb do not need to fear losing what they have been given.

When Jesus saves a soul, He does it for all eternity! If you are saved today, you will always be saved. (John 10:28; 1 Pet; 1:5; John 6:37-40). If you have been putting off salvation because you are afraid that you cannot do it, then let me encourage you to quit looking at yourself and what you can do. Turn to Jesus for Your salvation. You see, Salvation belongs to the Lord! If He can save you then He can keep you saved!



When you think about Christmas this year, try to keep things in perspective. The world must not be allowed to take over the narrative of the Christmas season towards paganism, commercialism and the world of fantasy. You and I who have been exposed to the truth of God's Word need to remember that Christmas is about that special day when God sent His Son into the world to be the sacrifice for our sins. Christmas is about you coming to know God. After all, that is why God sent His Son into the world!

I Am Jesus' Little Lamb from www.traditionalmusic.co.uk
Words: Henriette von Hayn, 1778.
Music: German, 1784.

I am Jesus' little lamb,
Ever glad at heart I am;
For my Shepherd gently guides me,
Knows my need, and well provides me
Loves me every day the same,
Even calls me by my name.

Day by day, at home, away,
Jesus is my Staff and Stay.
When I hunger, Jesus feeds me,
Into pleasant pastures leads me;
When I thirst, He bids me go
Where the quiet waters flow.

Who so happy as I am,
Even now the Shepherd's lamb?
And when my short life is ended,
By His angel host attended,
He shall fold me to His breast,
There within His arms to rest.

Do you know Mary's Little Lamb this morning? If not, why not come and let me introduce you to Him today? If you do know Him, but things aren't as they should be between you and the Lord, then I challenge you to bring yourself and your need to Jesus right now. He can fix what is broken in your life.

Yes, Mary had a little Lamb, do you?

LET US PRAY