

The birthplace for The Lamb

By Joanne Carraway

He was born, by God's Providence and Sovereignty, in a manger. 'Twas such a crude and primitive setting for the birth of any child, much less a child destined for kingship, the only child to ever live whose blood was that of the Divine. Yet this birth had been meticulously planned and predetermined by the Almighty since "before the foundation of the earth", even down to the minute detail of location.

The glorious promise was given to Adam and Eve after their transgression that One was coming Who would bear their penalty for sin in His own body, a substitutionary sacrifice. The promise stated that Satan would bruise this One's heel, but this Coming One would bruise Satan's head (authority). How often Adam and Eve must have pondered this promise in their hearts as they toiled for their living following the expulsion from the Garden, for the promise was clear that this One would be of their seed.

In the centuries to follow, God began unfolding His Master Plan for restoring fallen mankind, a race of beings who, because of Edenic inheritance, were now unwitting partakers of this destructive sin nature which usurped man's rightful standing with his Creator. Products of their parentage, the creatures who were created "in the image of God" now found themselves in the dilemma and pathetic plight of being born "in the image and likeness of Adam." Our Father, because of His very Nature, could not abandon us to such hopeless and fatalistic destiny.

Thus, the Hebrew nation was chosen as the vessel who was given the arduous task of strict adherence to a religious system which in every ritual and sacrifice was pointing to the Coming and Just One. Yes, though ten thousand times ten thousand lambs were slain and offered up, the rivers of blood of the sacrifices were but somber reminders decade after decade of the severity of sin and of the total ineptness of mankind's ability to overcome and master it. The Hebrew's responsibility was not an enviable one, for the slightest deviation from the elaborate rituals and sacrifices would distort the picture which was so beautifully depicting the true "Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."

As the Lamb of God, we see Jesus as the fulfillment of the five great offerings in the book of Leviticus: (1) the Meat Offering; (2) the Burnt Offering; (3) the Sin Offering; (4) the Peace Offering; and (5) the Trespass Offering. The Lord Jesus Christ has become the provision for all that we shall ever need. How fitting, then, it is that His birthplace was that where the lambs were birthed which were to be sacrifices for the temple worship. How fitting, then, it is that the shepherds, the caretakers of the sacrificial lambs, were the first to receive announcement of The Lamb's Birth. How fitting, then, it is for God to have placed Him in that manger, which, in and of itself, symbolizes provision and sustenance. How fitting, then, it is that the Babe lay there wrapped in swaddling clothes, the same type cloth used in burial, for, unknowingly, Mary spoke prophetically of His purpose in death as she

thus clothed Him in birth. How fitting, then, it is that this was the chosen setting for the birthplace of The Lamb and how like our God to do such a thing!