

December 18, 2022

The Shepherds

Our God is not a God of chance or random acts. Everything He does has a specific intent, a specific purpose. It is all part of His design for humanity. As we read from the Bible, we can see His design creating paradigms. A **paradigm** is a pattern, a model, a template, a specific design with purpose and intent. A paradigm is the opposite of a coincidence or random act. Paradigms show us God is in control and He created everything with a purpose and design. Paradigms are very important because they help us understand the Spirit of Prophecy and helps us to see God's direction for our lives. God already knows what is going to happen before it happens. Many times, His Prophets (or angels) call forth His Kingdom to manifest in this earth. **Amos 3:7** *Surely the Lord God does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.*

The Paradigm of the Shepherds, Lambs, King David and Bethlehem

It was prophesied that Jesus would be called a "**shepherd**" for His people 700 years before He was born. **Isa 40:11** *He will feed His flock like a **shepherd**; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom.*

Ps 23:1 *The Lord is my **shepherd**; I shall not want.*

There were different types of shepherds in the time of Jesus. The typical shepherd that watched the sheep, the ones in the "family business" were lower on the social scale. But the shepherds who heard the angel proclaim the birth of our Savior, were from the Temple priesthood. They prepared and watched over the sheep in order to produce sacrificial lambs for the Jewish festivals. These lambs had to be perfect without spot or blemish.

Luke 2:8-16 *Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in **swaddling cloths**, lying in a **manger**."*

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" 15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."

Some Theologians believe the "swaddling cloths" were the same cloths used to wrap the newborn lambs used in the Passover. They also speculate the possibility of these cloths coming from the Temple priest Zacharias who was married to Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist and cousin to Mary.

Jesus referred to Himself as the **Good Shepherd** in **John 10:1-39**

It was prophesied that He would be a **sacrificial lamb**. Jesus was both the **Good Shepherd** and the **Lamb of God**. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus equates Himself to God. As the Lamb, Jesus equates Himself to being human. This addresses His sovereignty and His mortality.

Isa 53:7 *He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a **lamb** to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.*

John 1:29 *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The **Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world!"*

It was prophesied that Jesus would be **born in Bethlehem**.

Mic 5:2,4 *"But you, **Bethlehem Ephrathah**, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me, The One to be Ruler in Israel" ...4 And He shall stand and **feed His flock** In the strength of the LORD"* Another prophecy indicating Jesus would be a shepherd.

Consider this: Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth. The Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus decreed a census and for everyone to report to their ancestral home, so they had to journey to Bethlehem AKA the City of David because Joseph was in the blood line of King David. **Remember:** "All things work together for the good for those who..."

Another prophecy of Jesus, 700 years before His birth: He will be born of the blood line of King David

Isa 9:6-7 *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, **Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom**, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*

The **angel Gabriel** confirms the prophecy of Jesus and His Kingdom on the throne of His father David, and prophesies to Mary, that she will be the mother of Jesus. 6 months earlier, Gabriel prophesied to Zacharias and Elizabeth about John the Baptist.

Luke 1:26-33 *Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, **of the house of David**. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"*

Speak or "Call Forth" the Kingdom of God

*29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the **angel said to her**, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of **His father David**. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."*

Bethlehem was the town where the sheep were born, raised and sold for the sacrifices in Jerusalem at the temple during the Jewish festivals. Basically, **Bethlehem was the town of shepherds**, so it only makes sense that the Great Shepherd would be born there. Bethlehem means "**House of Bread**"

700 years before His birth it was prophesied Jesus would be the **Good Shepherd**, and the **sacrificial lamb of God**, from the **blood line of King David**, born in **Bethlehem**, known as the **City of David** also meaning "**House of Bread**." Jesus said He is the "**bread of life**." Bethlehem is the shepherd capital of Israel. At His birth, Jesus is placed in a food trough (being the "bread of life"). Many of the lambs raised were for the Passover festival. These all had to be **first born lambs**. Jesus was the **first born** of Mary and Joseph. The Lamb of God was sacrificed on the cross during **Passover** when all the other lambs were being sacrificed!

The Bible is absolutely amazing! It is truly the Word of God. There are more prophecies of the Second Coming of Jesus than the first. Are you ready? Have you received Him into your heart? Is He your Lord and Savior? Jesus came to give us abundant life. He has wonderful plans for each of our lives, but we must follow Him in order for these plans to manifest in our lives.