



Intro: Success vs. Salvation

We often spend our lives chasing "The Gift of Success"—something that makes us look good *now*. But God offers us "The Gift of Salvation"—something that makes us right with Him *forever*. This week, we look at why the Bread of Life was born in the "House of Bread" and why the Savior of the world first appeared to the people who handled the sacrifices.

Scripture & Discussion

I. The Sign for the Lowly: Luke 2:8-12

- **Context:** The angel bypassed the politicians in Jerusalem to speak to shepherds—the night-shift workers who were "brave, detached, and smelled like sheep."
- **Question:** Why do you think God chose shepherds to be the first witnesses of the Messiah? What does this tell us about who the gift of salvation is for?
- **Question:** The teaching notes that these shepherds likely raised the flawless lambs used for Temple sacrifices. How does that change your perspective on them being the first to see "The Lamb of God"?

II. The Miracle of the Incarnation: Micah 5:2 & John 1:12

- **Context:** Athanasius said, "*He became what we are that He might make us what He is.*" Jesus had to be fully human to represent us and fully God to save us.
- **Question:** We often focus on Jesus as a moral teacher or a seasonal decoration. What is the danger of seeking Jesus for "success" (changing our circumstances) rather than "salvation" (changing our hearts)?
- **Question:** Look at the "Success vs. Salvation" comparison. Which of those "Success" traps (pressure, emptiness, fading rewards) have you felt most recently?

III. The Bread of Life: John 6:35, 48-51

- **Context:** Bethlehem means "House of Bread." Jesus was born in a manger (a feeding trough) and wrapped in the same cloths used for sacrificial lambs.
- **Question:** Jesus says, "*Whoever comes to me will never go hungry.*" What are some "temporary snacks" (social media, money, status) we try to use to satisfy our soul's hunger instead of Jesus?
- **Question:** Bread is universal and always in season. How does that imagery help you describe Jesus to someone who feels they aren't "religious" enough for God?

Closing Challenge

Salvation isn't a reward for a job well done; it's a gift for those who know they are hungry. **Reflection:** Spend a moment in silence asking yourself: *Am I trying to earn God's approval through my success, or am I resting in the salvation He already provided?*