

# The Passover Lamb

Dr. Oliver Blosser



As the week of our LORD Jesus' passion begins, it would be wise and worth the time to examine what the Bible teaches about Jesus as the Passover Lamb. Let's look at this important theme of Messianic Redemption from a Hebraic perspective.

Jesus is the Lamb of God or God's Lamb. The expression 'the Lamb of God' is a figure of speech used to describe the sacrificial nature of our LORD Jesus' life.

The Sacred Scriptures speak of the first Passover Lamb in Exodus 12 prior to the tenth and final plague against the gods of Egypt. This plague—the death of the first-born son in Egyptian families—generated the Exodus of the Nation of Israel from Egypt.

## **The Passover Lamb Presented**

In Exodus 12:1-20, basic instructions are given regarding the Passover Lamb for each family. A time schedule is given based on the lunar calendar. Nisan or Abib is the first month of the religious year in Judaism. There are three chronological events which can be applied to Jesus as our Passover Lamb.

- √ Choose The Lamb      Nisan 10
- √ Watch the Lamb      Nisan 11-14
- √ Slaughter the Lamb    Nisan 14

The Passover Lamb of Exodus 12 is a type of the Lamb of God. The People of Israel were saved by the blood of the lamb, who gave up life so that each family's member's lives might be spared.

**Exodus 12:12-13–12**— *“For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. 13 Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.*

Under the New Covenant, believers are saved by the Blood of Jesus and we are rescued from eternal death and damnation.

**Hebrews 9:12-14–12**—*Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He [Jesus] entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

### **The Passover Lamb Predicted**

The Prophet Isaiah predicted the Passover Lamb in the Suffering Servant of the LORD poem of Isaiah 52:13–53:12.

#### **Isaiah 53:7** —

*He was oppressed and He was afflicted,  
Yet He opened not His mouth;  
He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,  
And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,  
So He opened not His mouth.*

### **The Passover Lamb Pinpointed to Israel**

It was John the Baptist, the Messianic Forerunner of the Messiah, who pointed to Jesus of Nazareth as the Passover Lamb, God’s special Lamb.

**John 1:29, 36–29**— *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ... 36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!”*

## The Passover Lamb Preached To The World

Philip, the Evangelist, witnessed to the Ethiopian treasurer, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. He had purchased the Scroll of Isaiah and was reading it on his way home from Jerusalem.

*Acts 8:30-35—So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 The place in the Scripture which he read was this:*

*"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;  
And as a lamb before its shearer is silent,  
So He opened not His mouth.*

*33 In His humiliation His justice was taken away,  
And who will declare His generation?  
For His life is taken from the earth."*

*34 So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.*

## The Passover Lamb Praised Throughout Eternity

The redeemed believers of all ages will praise Jesus, our Passover Lamb, throughout eternity for His Messianic Redemption.

*Revelation 5:6, 13–6—And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ... 13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:*

*"Blessing and honor and glory and power  
Be to Him who sits on the throne,  
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"*

Let's see how three aspects of Exodus 12 dovetail with the week of Jesus' Passion, known as Holy Week. During the events of this week, Jesus became the Passover Lamb that takes away the sins of the world and fulfilled His Messianic Mission of Redemption from the ruin of sin.

## Choose The Lamb, Nisan 10

When Jesus rode a donkey into the city of Jerusalem, fulfilling a Messianic prophecy of Zechariah, it was lamb selection day for the Jewish Passover Festival. That day became known as Palm Sunday. As the People of Israel were selecting their lambs, Jesus rode into the beautiful golden city of Jerusalem.

**Zechariah 9:9** —

*“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!  
Behold, your King is coming to you;  
He is just and having salvation,  
Lowly and riding on a donkey,  
A colt, the foal of a donkey.*

The Lamb was to be chosen on this day.

**Exodus 12:3-4-3**—*Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: “On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. 4 And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb.*

Some of the people recognized Jesus as the Messiah. The Jewish People understood that the Messiah had a two-fold mission: 1) to redeem from the ruin of sin, and 2) to reign in glory after defeating Rome. Few Jews were interested in a Messiah redeeming from the ruin of sin because they had the Second Temple (now the Herodian Temple) and the animal sacrifices to cover their sins. When Jesus first announced His suffering, death, burial and resurrection, even Peter would not accept this Messianic truth and the Biblical Mission of Redemption.

**Matthew 16:21-23-21**—*From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. 22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!” 23 But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”*

Jesus, knowing that His first mission was redemption from the ruin of sin, was saying on lamb selection day— *“Look at Me; I am the real Passover Lamb! Select Me as Your LORD and Savior. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost, Luke 19:10; cf., Matthew 18:11.*

The People of Israel on that day were not choosing Jesus as their Messianic Passover Lamb. Their choice was for a Messianic Liberator who would lead a rebellion against Rome. That's why they used the title, 'Son of David', rather than the 'Son of Man'; for they were looking for King Messiah. That's why they used the Hebrew word Hosanna which means 'Save us, now!', or 'Rescue us, now!' That's why they probably used palm branches for they were a symbol of "freedom" in Judaism.

### **Watch The Lamb, Nisan 11-14**

So the Jewish People choose a political lamb rather than the Passover Lamb. Then the Lamb was to be watched for four days after the selection.

*Exodus 12:5-6a-5—Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6 Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. ...*

All Passover lambs were watched for the next four days. Each lamb had to be perfect without spot or blemish. Even Jesus, as the real Passover Lamb, was watched.

*Psalm 22:17 —*

I can count all My bones.  
They look and stare at Me.

*John 19:36-37-36—For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." 37 And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."*

Was Jesus a perfect Lamb without spot or blemish? Listen to the testimonies of the eyewitnesses, who watched the Lamb—

#### **• The Testimony of Judas**

*Matthew 27:3-4-3—Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!"*

### • The Testimony of Pontius Pilate

**Matthew 27:22-25–22**—*Pilate said to them, “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said to him, “Let Him be crucified!” 23 Then the governor said, “Why, what evil has He done?” But they cried out all the more, saying, “Let Him be crucified!” 24 When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.” 25 And all the people answered and said, “His blood be on us and on our children.”*

**Luke 23:13-15–13**—*Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, 14 said to them, “You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; 15 no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him.*

### • The Testimony of Pilate’s wife

**Matthew 27:17-19–17**—*Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” 18 For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy. 19 While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, “Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.”*

Barabbas becomes the scapegoat and Jesus, the Sacrificial Lamb.

### • The Testimony of the Thief on the Cross

**Luke 23:39-43–39**—*Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.” 40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” 42 Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” 43 And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”*

### • The Testimony of the Roman Centurion

**Luke 23:47**—*So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, “Certainly this was a righteous Man!”*

**Matthew 27:54-56–54**—*So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God!” 55 And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, 56 among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.*

There you have the verdict of eyewitnesses who watched the Lamb! The Lamb is innocent, but crucified and sacrificed as the will of God!

While Jesus was praying the Garden of Gethsemane, He told His disciples to watch and pray. This is a reminder of the first Passover, when the Jewish People were told to watch and pray because the angel of death would come and pass over their homes. The Jewish People had a tradition that the Exodus occurred on a Thursday night, so Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Passover Seder on Thursday. After the Passover lamb was killed and roasted, the people ate the Passover lamb.

***Exodus 12:6-11-6**—Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. 7 And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. 8 Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9 Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. 10 You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. 11 And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD'S Passover.*

***Matthew 26:26-29-26**—And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."*

Just as the People of Israel watched and prayed that Passover evening for the Death-Angel to pass over their homes, so Jesus asked His disciples on that Maundy Thursday night to watch and pray that the Death-Angel would pass over. Listen to Jesus' prayer—

***Matthew 26:39, 42-39**—He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." ... 42 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."*

The Death-Angel came to Jesus; He was Judas Iscariot, possessed by Satan.

*John 13:21, 26-27–21—When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.” ... 26 Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.” And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27 Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, “What you do, do quickly.”*

This was called the ‘Night of Watchings’ in Judaism.

### **Slaughter The Lamb, Nisan 14**

Jesus was to become our Passover Lamb so that we would be rescued from the Destroyer by His Blood.

*Exodus 12:23 — For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.*

*Hebrews 2:14-15–14—Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

*Hebrews 2:9—But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.*

Remember that the wages of sin is eternal death, i.e., eternal separation from the presence of God, cf., Romans 6:23. Jesus suffered this kind of pain and suffering for us when He cried out from the cross—

**Psalm 22:1—**

*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?  
Why are You so far from helping Me,  
And from the words of My groaning?*

**Matthew 27:45-46-45**—*Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*

The darkness represents the lack of the Presence of God; for God is light. It is a supernatural darkness; for a solar eclipse cannot occur at the Passover during a full moon.

**1 John 1:5** —*This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*

The Jewish People of Jesus' Day had memorized many of the Psalms from the Psalter. Jesus certainly would have had His disciples memorize Psalm 22, a Messianic Psalm known as the Crucifixion Psalm because of verse 16— They pierced My hands and My feet.

When a Rabbi wanted his disciples to recite and meditate on a Psalm, he would speak the first verse. When he wanted them to complete their meditation, he would recite the final verse of the Psalm.

**Psalm 22:31** —

*They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born,  
That He has done this.*

**John 19:30**—*So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.*

The expression "He has done this" and "It is finished" are identical in meaning. Jesus wanted His disciples at the crucifixion scene to be eyewitnesses to the fulfillment of Psalm 22. All of the disciples were present except for Judas.

Psalm 22 is the only place in the Scriptures where we learn about the Messiah's suffering from His viewpoint. What a great prophecy-psalm is Psalm 22. It is a psalm by the authorship of David about Messianic Redemption by the Messiah. It was composed by David a thousand years before its fulfillment.

It should be pointed out that when Jesus spoke His seventh statement from the cross— "It is finished," that it was 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon— the time of the evening Temple sacrifice. At the very time of Jesus' death, the Jewish People brought their Passover lamb to the Temple to have its throat slit.

## **The Messiah, Unlike The Forefathers, Is Forsaken By God.**

**Psalm 22:1-5** —

- 1 *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?  
Why are You so far from helping Me,  
And from the words of My groaning?*
- 2 *O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear;  
And in the night season, and am not silent.*
- 3 *But You are holy,  
Enthroned in the praises of Israel.*
- 4 *Our fathers trusted in You;  
They trusted, and You delivered them.*
- 5 *They cried to You, and were delivered;  
They trusted in You, and were not ashamed.*

The fathers are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

## **The Messiah Is Mocked By The People.**

**Psalm 22:6-8** —

- 6 *But I am a worm, and no man;  
A reproach of men, and despised by the people.*
- 7 *All those who see Me ridicule Me;  
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,*
- 8 *“He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him;  
Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!”*

Here the Messiah refers to Himself as a ‘worm’, a reference to the fact that He is covered with blood because of the crown of thorns, the scourgings, and the piercings to his hands, feet and side.

## **The Messiah By Faith Pleads To The Father For Help**

**Psalm 22:9-11** —

- 9 *But You are He who took Me out of the womb;  
You made Me trust while on My mother’s breasts.*
- 10 *I was cast upon You from birth.  
From My mother’s womb  
You have been My God.*
- 11 *Be not far from Me,  
For trouble is near;  
For there is none to help.*

The Messiah trusts in God to be His Helper.

## **The Messiah Is Surrounded By His Enemies.**

**Psalm 22:12-13** —

- 12 *Many bulls have surrounded Me;  
Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me.*
- 13 *They gape at Me with their mouths,  
Like a raging and roaring lion.*

The 'bulls of Bashan' are the Jewish religious leaders being compared to the fine beef cattle that graze in Bashan, which is now northern Jordan/Golan Heights.

## **The Messiah Describes His Painful Sufferings.**

**Psalm 22:14-15** —

- 14 *I am poured out like water,  
And all My bones are out of joint;  
My heart is like wax;  
It has melted within Me.*
- 15 *My strength is dried up like a potsherd,  
And My tongue clings to My jaws;  
You have brought Me to the dust of death.*

The Messiah dies of a broken heart. It was our sins which broke His heart. Listen to the Messiah speak in Psalm 40—

**Psa. 40:12** —

*For innumerable evils have surrounded me;  
My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up;  
They are more than the hairs of my head;  
Therefore my heart fails me.*

Our sins were transferred to Jesus and He suffered the punishment for them. Again, the Messiah speaks in Psalm 69 —

**Psalm 69:20-21** —

- 20 *Reproach has broken my heart,  
And I am full of heaviness;  
I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none;  
And for comforters, but I found none.*
- 21 *They also gave me gall for my food,  
And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

This painful suffering for our sins broke the Messiah's heart. As a result, His Blood cleans us from all sin, cf., I John 1:7, 9. Because of this Messianic Redemption, we now have the forgiveness of sin and the promise of eternal life.

### **The Messiah Possesses Pierced Hands And Feet**

**Psalm 22:16-17** —

16    *For dogs have surrounded Me;  
      The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.  
      They pierced My hands and My feet;*  
17    *I can count all My bones.  
      They look and stare at Me.*

The piercing of the Messiah's hands and feet as an accurate translation is verified by the complete Isaiah Scroll from the Dead Sea Scrolls. In order to deny crucifixion, some Jewish scholars have translated— "like a lion, they are at my hands and my feet." Then they apply to the Psalm some event in David's life— denying the Psalm's Messianic character. The 'dogs' in this passage refers to the Romans. Observe how Jesus' crucifixion fulfilled this psalm prophecy.

**John 19:36-37-36**—*For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." 37 And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."*

### **The Messiah Loses His Garments**

**Psalm 22:18** —

*They divide My garments among them,  
And for My clothing they cast lots.*

Lots are cast by the Roman soldiers for the Messiah's garments/vestures.

**John 19:24** — *They [the Roman soldiers] said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says:*

*"They divided My garments among them,  
And for My clothing they cast lots."*

*Therefore the soldiers did these things.*

## The Messiah Prays For His Resurrection

*Psalm 22:19-21 —*

- 19 *But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me;  
O My Strength, hasten to help Me!*
- 20 *Deliver Me from the sword,  
My precious life from the power of the dog.*
- 21 *Save Me from the lion's mouth  
And from the horns of the wild oxen!  
You have answered Me.*

Will the Father accept this Messianic Redemption? The answer will be found in the Resurrection of the Messiah. The answer is 'YES!' For the Apostle Paul writes— For indeed Christ, our Passover Lamb, was sacrificed for us, I Corinthians 5:7b.