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# The "Lamb of God" Title in John's Gospel: Background, Exegesis, and Major Themes

Christiane Shaker

christiane.shaker@student.shu.edu

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Seton Hall University

THE “LAMB OF GOD” TITLE IN JOHN’S GOSPEL:  
BACKGROUND, EXEGESIS, AND MAJOR THEMES

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGY  
CONCENTRATION IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

BY  
CHRISTIANE SHAKER

South Orange, New Jersey  
October 2016

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## **Abstract**

This study focuses on the testimony of John the Baptist—“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” [ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου] (John 1:29, 36)—and its impact on the narrative of the Fourth Gospel. The goal is to provide a deeper understanding of this rich image and its influence on the Gospel. In an attempt to do so, three areas of concentration are explored. First, the most common and accepted views of the background of the “Lamb of God” title in first century Judaism and Christianity are reviewed. An effort is made to determine the intended reference underlying the word “lamb,” whether taken literally or figuratively, and to analyze the title in light of the use of the lamb in the Old Testament Jewish animal sacrifices. The New Testament and Christian first century writings are also examined. Second, the study analyzes the literary structure of John 1, includes an exegesis of John 1:29-34, and discusses the Lamb of God title as well as other titles of Jesus found in the pericope. In addition, this discussion provides an overview of the diverse contributions offered by recent scholars who have examined the “Lamb Of God” title. Their different claims are grounded in the Old Testament theology of sacrificial traditions and in the existence of different Semitic dialects in Palestine in the first century AD. Finally, this study addresses the purpose for which the Evangelist, at the beginning of his Gospel, introduces the Baptist’s testimony about Jesus as lamb and its impact on the rest of the Gospel. The discussion follows the pertinent Passover and Exodus themes, theological motifs, and references to the paschal lamb in relevant passages so to reach a structural conclusion: as a witness to Jesus’ death and resurrection, the beloved disciple John confirms the Baptist’s salvific message and connects Jesus’ activities and discourses with the Passover and Exodus themes. Ultimately, the Evangelist portrays Jesus in the Passion narrative as the true paschal lamb. As an eyewitness, the beloved disciple makes an intertextual correlation with the Passover ritual and the slaughtering of the lamb through his description of the various details concerning the Crucifixion. In summary, the study explains the Lamb of God title and demonstrates how the prophetic testimony of John the Baptist regarding Jesus as the Lamb of God, found at the beginning of the Gospel, is ultimately confirmed and handed on by the eyewitness testimony of the beloved disciple at the end of Gospel.

**Keywords:** Passover, suffering servant, lamb, paschal sacrifice, Son of God, Akedah, scapegoat

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May God enlighten us all with the love of the Scriptures to enable us to continue to inspire others with the truth of our faith.

Christiane Shaker

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## Introduction

In the beginning of John's Gospel, the Evangelist purposely introduces the Baptist's testimony as he refers to Jesus' first public appearance. After experiencing a theophany, the Baptist prophesies that Jesus is "the Lamb of God" whose mission is to "take away the sin," not only of Israel, but of "the world" (John 1:29, 36). The Baptist also refers to the preexistence of Jesus (1:30), to his atoning death (1:29), and to his being the Son of God (1:34). The "Lamb of God" is the "Son of God." The Baptist's eyewitness account offers a prophetic understanding of Jesus' mission and identity. As a witness to Jesus' death and resurrection, the Evangelist believed that Jesus is "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29). The rest of the Gospel then interprets this image in terms of the Passover. John highlights three celebrations of the Passover in Jesus' public ministry and reveals Jesus as the true paschal lamb. The Baptist's prophecy is fulfilled during the lifetime of the Evangelist; the former bore witness (1:32), without seeing fulfillment, while the latter believed because he saw and so bore witness "that you may also believe" (19:35). The crucifixion of Jesus would simply have been another Roman execution. However, in light of Christ's resurrection, believers in the first century AD understood the salvific nature of the Paschal Mystery, in which Jesus is the sacrificial lamb.

The focus of this thesis will center on the testimony of the Baptist—"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" [ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου] (John 1:29, 36)—and its impact on the narrative of the Fourth Gospel. The author believed the words of the Baptist and ultimately portrayed Jesus as the true paschal sacrifice. In an attempt to understand the depth of the meaning of this rich image and its impact on the

Gospel, the thesis will probe the Scriptures and other literature of the period while concentrating on three areas.

The first chapter will survey the most common and accepted views of the background of the “Lamb of God” title in first century Judaism and Christianity. Notably, this title is complemented by an indication of the lamb’s mission of taking “away the sin of the world,” which provides a possible atoning perspective. Therefore, this analysis will be made in light of the use of the lamb in the Old Testament Jewish animal sacrifices. The later developments in the understanding of some sacrificial traditions as expressed in late Second Temple Jewish literature will be considered. The New Testament and Christian writings of the first century will also be examined.

The second chapter will examine the literary structure of John 1 and provide an exegesis of the pericope containing the “Lamb of God” image, considering also its theological implications. The chapter will also include an analysis of the diverse contributions offered by recent scholars who have examined this title in light of the Old Testament theology of sacrificial traditions. For example, the most common views are those that associate the title with the Passover lamb and the suffering servant of Isaiah. The less common views include the suggestion of an apocalyptic lamb based on Jewish literature outside the Bible as well as proposals to identify the meaning of this title in an Aramaic background or in an interpretation rooted in different Semitic dialects.

The third chapter will examine the impact of the Baptist’s testimony about Jesus as lamb on the rest of the Gospel, and so understand the purpose for which the Evangelist introduces that testimony at the beginning of his Gospel. For example, the chapter will consider the pertinent Passover and Exodus themes, theological motifs, and references to the paschal lamb found in

relevant passages. Moreover, the manner by which the Evangelist portrays Jesus as the true paschal lamb in the narrative of his passion and death will be examined. John thus confirms the Baptist's original salvific message: Jesus is "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29, 36).

## CHAPTER I

### Exposition of the Background of the “Lamb of God” Title in First Century Judaism and Christianity

#### I. Introduction

In the Gospels, numerous titles were attributed to Jesus of Nazareth, believed to be the Christ, among them the “Lamb of God” (ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, John 1:29, 36). In this title, however, what is the intended reference underlying the word “lamb”? Is the word used literally or figuratively? Also, this title is complemented by a phrase indicating the lamb’s mission of taking “away the sin of the world,” which provides a possible atoning perspective to the “Lamb of God” figure.

The analysis of the background of the “Lamb of God” title thus needs to be explored in the light of the use of the lamb in the Jewish animal sacrifices, many of which were for the atonement of sins, as expressed in the Old Testament (OT). Another concept in the OT (specifically, in Isaiah) is the acceptance by the Lord God of an individual’s suffering as atonement for the sins of others. These beliefs provided the background for Christianity, having its roots in Judaism. The suffering and death of Jesus Christ became the ultimate sacrifice offered once and for all. God accepted this atoning sacrifice for the remission of the sins of the many.

This chapter is an exposition of the most common and accepted views of the background of the “Lamb of God” title in the first century AD. This will be accomplished by reviewing the “lamb” figures and sacrifices in OT Theology as well as the later developments in the understanding of some sacrificial traditions as expressed in late Second Temple Jewish literature. The New Testament and Christian writings of the first century will also be considered.

## II. The Passover Lamb

The Book of Exodus marks the beginning of the people of Israel in their transition from being clans to becoming a nation unified by its call to faithfulness to the Lord God. The plagues that affected Egypt and the miracle at the sea of Reeds reveal God's power and love manifested in His delivering Israel from slavery. Before the tenth and final plague, God instructed Moses on how to celebrate the first Passover (Exod 12). God commanded the following concerning the lambs:

Tell all the congregation of Israel... your lamb [ἄψ, πρόβατον] shall be without blemish ... from the sheep or from the goats (Exod 12:3-5)... Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood... and touch the lintel and the two doorposts... the LORD will pass over [פסח]... and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to slay you (12:22-23)... you shall not break a bone of it (12:46).<sup>1</sup>

The first Passover becomes an ordinance to be celebrated forever [עולד] (12:24). The blood of the Passover lamb becomes the sign of bringing deliverance from death to the first-born of Israel (12:12). The Israelites were to commemorate this event of liberation throughout all generations by remembering this “night of watching” (12:42). Even though the Passover must be celebrated annually, some of the instructions are applied to future celebrations in the land of Canaan (12:19, 48-49; 13:5-14). Furthermore, the narrative in Exodus indicates that the Passover lamb was not a sacrifice of expiation for sin or a means of atonement. Rather, its purpose was to ward off evil, protecting Israel from death.<sup>2</sup> Later, Jewish tradition gave a redemptive value to the blood of the lamb.<sup>3</sup> In the biblical texts, some passages reveal that the paschal victim was for a sin offering. For example in the book of Numbers the Lord commanded Moses as part of the

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<sup>1</sup> English Bible quotations are taken from the RSV, unless otherwise indicated. The abbreviations of the biblical books and other sources are according to *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Jesper T. Nielsen, “The Lamb of God: The Cognitive Structure of a Johannine Metaphor,” in *Imagery in the Gospel of John*, ed. Jörg Frey et al., WUNT 200 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 234-5: “the Passover lamb functions as an apotropaicum.”

<sup>3</sup> Marie-Emile Boismard, “Lamb of God,” *DBT* 299-300: “the Jewish tradition later on gave a redemptive value to the blood of the lamb, ‘Because of the blood of the covenant of circumcision, and because of the blood of the Pasch, I have delivered you from Egypt’” (Pirqe R. Eliezer 29; cf. Mekhilta on Ex 12).

Passover offering: “one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement [כִּפֹּר] for you” (Num 28:22). Also in the book of Ezekiel, on the feast of Passover, the Lord commanded: “the prince shall provide for himself and all the people...a bull for a sin offering [הַטָּאֵת]” (Ezek 45:22).<sup>4</sup>

Other Old Testament narratives discuss historical events as well as rituals surrounding the celebration of Passover: e.g., Passover at Sinai (Num 9:4-11); first Passover in Canaan (Josh 5:10-11); Solomon’s celebration of the three annual festivals after the construction of the temple (1 Kgs 9:25; 2 Chr 8:12-13); Hezekiah’s Passover (2 Chr 30); and Josiah’s Passover (2 Kgs 23:21-23). Lastly, after the exile, Ezra’s Passover celebrated Israel’s coming back from captivity and its faithfulness to the covenant (Ezra 6:19-22).<sup>5</sup> Regarding Hezekiah’s Passover, the Masoretic and Septuagint texts do not refer to the “Passover Lamb” (RSV), but rather use the terms [כִּפֹּר, φασακ] (2 Chr 30:15, 17).<sup>6</sup> Also, the Passover offerings in Josiah’s time were “small cattle and... oxen” (2 Chr 35:8, 9). We can thereby conclude that other animals were slaughtered during the Passover observance.

While many important and sacred stages were commemorated by a Passover in the history of Israel, the challenge remains in understanding the symbolism of Passover in such stages. Prosic claims that every celebration of Passover suggested “antithetical correlations.”<sup>7</sup> A change from one condition to another requires a rite of passage. Therefore, she concludes that the

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYB 32 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 242: “these passages, then, show that the celebration of Passover came indeed to connote the wiping away of sins.”

<sup>5</sup> Tamara Prosic, *The Development and Symbolism of Passover until 70 CE*, JSOTSup 414 (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 76-7.

<sup>6</sup> Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 242: The noun πάσχα can denote either the feast or the animal.

<sup>7</sup> Prosic, *Development and Symbolism*, 79: “‘Slavery/freedom’ (exodus), ‘wanting/abundance’ (Canaan), ‘non-existence of law/establishment of law’ (Sinai), ‘temporary sanctuary/permanent sanctuary’ (Solomon), ‘defilement/purification’ (Hezekiah), ‘worship of many/worship of one’ (Josiah), and finally ‘exile/homeland’ (return from exile).”

celebration of Passover throughout biblical narratives can be symbolically interpreted as being that “rite of passage.”<sup>8</sup>

Outside the biblical texts, Philo of Alexandria (20 BC – AD 45) created a philosophical understanding of the Old Testament in Alexandria’s Hellenistic culture. He combined both Greek and Hebrew traditions in many of his works. In his writings, Philo treats the Passover not only historically (*Spec.* 2.41, 145-46, *Decal.* 159, *Mos.* 2.224), but also allegorically: Passover “means a passing over ... with promptness ... without ever turning back ... from the passions to gratitude to God the Savior; who has led it forth ... to freedom” (*Migr.* 25). And again: “For, by the Passover, is signified the crossing over of the created and perishable being to God” (*Sacr.* 63).

Elsewhere, Philo reiterates the figurative understanding of the Passover as the purification of the soul, a passing over from the passion of the body to become a lover of wisdom (*Spec.* 2.147). He speaks of the spiritual Passover of the soul (*Congr.* 106); Egypt becomes the metaphorical place of the passions (*Her.* 255). To strengthen his argument, Philo uses citations from the OT referring to Exodus, Genesis and other books. The Passover Lamb itself does not play an independent role; the application of its blood on the doorposts carries no spiritual significance in Philo’s writings,<sup>9</sup> which is contrary to those of Josephus.

Flavius Josephus (AD 37-100) was another prominent figure in first century Judaism. In his narrative of the first Passover [πάσχα], he explains this historical event where the Hebrews offered “the sacrifice” and “purified their houses with the blood” using a bunch of hyssop (*Ant.* 2.311-313). Josephus, in this account, does not specify the kind of animal used, yet he describes

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<sup>8</sup> Prosic, *Development and Symbolism*, 82: “Passover always meant betterment.”

<sup>9</sup> Nielsen, “The Lamb of God,” 236-7: “Philo uses the word πρόβατον for the animal, which he takes to derive from προβαίνω [to move forward]. Accordingly, he sees it as an allegory for the progress of the soul from the passions to a perfect virtuous state” (e.g., *Sacr.* 112).



the blood as having a purifying function. This interpretation is unique to him.<sup>10</sup> In other narratives he cites various types of animals used (*Ant.* 3.248-249). Josephus emphasizes the importance of purity, for example, when he describes the profanation of the Temple by some Samaritans during one Passover (*Ant.* 18.30). Also, as he recalls the last Passover in Jerusalem before the city's destruction, he mentions the incredible number of pilgrims who attended, all of whom were "pure and holy," excluding the defiled (*J.W.* 6.425-427).

In summary, Josephus saw the Passover as an annual memorial of deliverance out of Egypt (*Ant.* 17.213). Therefore it should be celebrated properly. He emphasizes the need for ritual purity on the part of the celebrants. Josephus does not mention the Passover lamb in particular but, as mentioned earlier, he does stress the importance of the purifying effects of its blood.

Paul of Tarsus (AD 5-67), a contemporary of Philo and Josephus, was a Pharisee (*Phil* 3:5) educated by Gamaliel (*Acts* 22:3). He converted to Christianity (*Gal* 1:1; *Acts* 9:1-19) and became one of the earliest missionaries to proclaim the gospel of Christ. Through his correspondence, Paul was able to oversee the communities of believers. He writes a letter to the Corinthians, dated AD 54-55 while in Ephesus (*1 Cor* 16:8) addressing serious matters concerning the community. In his letter, Paul begins by laying a Christological foundation as he proclaims Christ crucified, the wisdom of God (chapters 1-4). He then draws ethical implications as he addresses moral issues in the community (chapters 5-7). Paul exhorts the Corinthians to reject their old sinful way, "the old leaven" to become a "new dough" for "Christ our Paschal Lamb [*πάσχα*] has been sacrificed" (*1 Cor* 5:7). The direct way in which Paul sets forth this

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<sup>10</sup> Nielsen, "The Lamb of God," 238: "the blood of the Passover sacrifice brings the Israelites into a purified position that cannot be affected by death."

teaching, without further explanation, indicates that it is not new. Paul refers to the liturgical tradition of Christian Pascha that existed well before the writing of this letter.<sup>11</sup>

Paul recognizes that the Corinthians, although believers, are still living out their old sinful ways. He focuses on the feast of unleavened bread associated with Passover (Exod 12:15). He admonishes them to leave “the leaven of malice and evil” and exhorts them to live with “the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor 5:8). The crucifixion of Christ, which he metaphorically identifies with the slaughtering of the Passover lamb, leads to a new way of living.<sup>12</sup>

There are also references to Passover in the First Letter of Peter. The author exhorts the faithful—“gird up your minds” (1 Pet 1:13; cf. Exod 12:11)—because they “were ransomed” (1 Pet 1:18) by the “precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish” (1 Pet 1:19; cf. Exod 12:5), that is, without sin. The image of Christ as being a lamb echoes the story of Exodus; the faithful enter into a new life through the merits of the slain lamb—Jesus Christ.<sup>13</sup>

### **III. The Akedah**

The binding of Isaac in the book of Genesis (Gen 22) reflects Abraham’s perfect faith and love for God who provided him with a substitute for the sacrifice of Isaac. God put Abraham to the test by saying: “Take your son, your only-begotten son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah [מֹרְיָה] and offer him there as a burnt offering [עֹלָה] upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you” (Gen 22:2). Abraham leaves the following morning and on the third day reaches the mountain. He lays the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac to carry. On the way up, Isaac asks his father about the lamb [אֵימָה] for sacrifice. Abraham answered, “God will provide

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<sup>11</sup> Boismard, “Lamb of God,” 300.

<sup>12</sup> Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 241-2.

<sup>13</sup> Boismard, “Lamb of God,” 299-300.

[רָאָה] himself the lamb for a burnt offering my son” (22:8).<sup>14</sup> When they came to the place Abraham built an altar, arranged the wood and bound [עָקַד] his son Isaac. As He took the knife to slay his son, the angel of the Lord called on Abraham not to sacrifice “[his] son, [his] only-begotten son” (22:12).<sup>15</sup> God provided a ram for the burnt offering, which Abraham took and offered. Abraham called the place “the Lord will provide [יְהוָה יִרְאֵ].” God abundantly blessed Abraham and his descendants (22:16-18).

Rabbinic and midrashic texts commented on the Akedah by memorializing the act of Abraham’s perfect love and faithfulness to God. This also is true concerning Isaac’s willingness to be offered as a burnt sacrifice.<sup>16</sup> Even though the sacrifice of Isaac was not consummated, Jewish doctrine interpreted it as such: if God did not supply the ram, Isaac would willingly have been the burnt offering sacrifice.<sup>17</sup> The Jewish theology on the binding of Isaac [עֲקִידָה] existed prior to the Christian epoch and some of the writings correlate the sacrifice of Isaac with the Passover. This is demonstrated in different sources: *Jubilees*, 4Q225, Pseudo-Philo *Antiquitates Biblicae* and 4 Maccabees.<sup>18</sup> *Jubilees* (160-150 BC) sets the date of Isaac’s sacrifice on the 15<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Abraham Kuruvilla, “The *Aqedah* (Genesis 22): What is the Author Doing with What He is *Saying*?” *JETS* 55 (2012): 499, n. 38: “The verb [רָאָה] ‘to see/provide’ echoes through the account (Gen 22:8, 13-14×2). In fact, ‘Moriah’ [מִרְיָה] (Gen 22:2) also may quite likely be related to this root; thus, the ‘place of seeing.’ Moreover, one could also read [בְּהַר יְהוָה יִרְאֵ] (22:14b) as ‘in the mount, the Lord will be seen’ or ‘in the mount of the Lord, he will be seen,’ thus providing an etymology for what might have been the site of the Temple.” Martin McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, AnBib 27 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966), 166: “Jewish tradition, from the time of Josephus at least, considered that Abraham sacrificed Isaac at the site of the future temple.”

<sup>15</sup> Kuruvilla, *The Aqedah*, 505: “One might almost say: *For Abraham so loved God that he gave his only begotten son...*”

<sup>16</sup> Géza Vermès, “Redemption and Genesis xxii,” in *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies*, StPB 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 193: Vermès quotes G.Vajda, who remarks, “le thème du service d’amour d’Abraham n’a pas manqué d’être médité par le Talmud et le Midrash, le plus souvent en connexion, précisément, avec le sacrifice d’Isaac.”

<sup>17</sup> McNamara, *The New Testament*, 166: Jewish theology considered it consummated from the point of view of its effects...it “exists as a *memorial* before God; seeing the blood of Isaac he comes to the aid of Israel in time of distress... The sacrifice is further connected with the offering of the *Paschal lamb* and with the *Tamid*.”

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 165: “The Jewish theology on the binding of Isaac is in the main pre-Christian, seeing that many of its themes are attested in the works of Josephus, Philo, in the *Biblical antiquities* of Pseudo-Philo.”

of Nisan, which coincides with the Passover ritual (Exod 12:6).<sup>19</sup> When Abraham returned to Beer-Sheba, he observed a festival that he celebrated with joy for seven days of every year. He called it “the festival of the Lord.”<sup>20</sup> Also, 4Q225 (*Pseudo-Jubilees*’ 150 BC – AD 20) adds to the biblical text by representing Isaac as the one asking his father to tie him, indicating his active willingness to be sacrificed; it also connects the Akedah with Exodus.<sup>21</sup> The *Antiquitates Biblicae*<sup>22</sup> mentions the Akedah in three instances: First, *Balaam’s Divine Encounter*. God speaks of the election of the sons of Israel: “he [Abraham] brought him [Isaac] to be placed on the altar. But I gave him to his father and, because he did not object, his offering was acceptable before me, and in return for his blood I chose them” (LAB 18:5). Secondly, *Deborah’s Song*. God accepts Isaac’s sacrifice offered for the sins of men (32:2); God tells Abraham: “*Your memory shall be before me always, and your name and his [i.e., Isaac’s] will remain from one generation to another*” (32:4). Lastly, *Seila Sacrifice*. The free acceptance of sacrifice on the part of both Isaac and Seila (Jephthah’s daughter) is viewed as being very meritorious (40:2).<sup>23</sup> In 4-

<sup>19</sup> Vermès, “Redemption,” 215: “According to the Book of Jubilees, Mastema accused Abraham on the twelfth day of the first month” (*Jub.* 17:15-16; 18:3).

<sup>20</sup> Leroy A. Huizenga, *The New Isaac: Tradition and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew*, NovTSup 131 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 84-5: “The Akedah has become the etiology of Passover, the only seven-day feast in the Bible (Lev 23:6; Num 28:17)... Abraham’s festival is marked by ‘rejoicing’ and ‘joy’ (*Jub.* 18:18-19)... the first Passover is “the beginning of joy” (*Jub.* 49:2) and the purpose of the annual celebration is to ‘rejoice before the Lord’” (*Jub.* 49:22).

<sup>21</sup> Huizenga, *Isaac*, 89-91. Géza Vermès, “New Light on the Sacrifice of Isaac from 4Q225,” *JJS* 47 (1996): 141-3, n. 12: “This speech by Isaac is lacking in Gen 22. By contrast, as the editors note, the targumic account (PsJ, Neofiti, and Fragmentary Targum), as well as Gen. R. 56:8 testify to such an additional speech by Isaac. Of Isaac’s opening word only a single letter, clearly a kaph, is legible in 4Q225, but there is space for 15 more letters. However, all the Targums begin with the imperative כפית (‘Bind my hands properly’). Cf. also Gen. R. 56:7, ‘Bind me very well’. Hence the reconstruction [כפית], proposed by the editors enjoys an extremely high degree of probability....” Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “The Sacrifice of Isaac in Qumran Literature,” *Bib* 83 (2002): 219-20: this Qumran addition to the biblical account “becomes important for the developing Jewish tradition...it reveals new ways the basic biblical account was already being developed within the Jewish tradition in pre-Christian Palestinian Judaism.” 220-6: Fitzmyer comments on Vermès’ interpretation of the Qumran text where Vermès delineates twelve elements that he considers ‘the pre-Christian skeleton.’ However, Fitzmyer maintains that some are not pre-Christian, but rather they appear for the first time in the Christian era.

<sup>22</sup> Huizenga, *Isaac*, 104: The dating of *L.A.B.* before or after the destruction of the temple remains a debatable issue.

<sup>23</sup> Huizenga, *Isaac*, 104-114. Edward Kessler, *Bound by the Bible: Jews, Christians and the Sacrifice of Isaac* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 104: “Pseudo-Philo explains that, like Isaac, Seila was ready to be

Maccabees (ca. AD 19-72), Isaac's willingness to be sacrificed serves as a model for the martyrs who are dying for their faith as they refuse to adopt pagan ways, thus associating Isaac with martyrdom (4 Macc 13:12; 16:20).<sup>24</sup> Finally, centuries later, in the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, the blood of the binding of Isaac is mentioned four times revealing its redemptive value and correlating it with the first Passover.<sup>25</sup>

In the first century AD the association of the Akedah (i.e., the self-offering of Isaac) with the Passover was thus already established in the Jewish tradition. Through the merits of Abraham but mainly those of Isaac, pardon was obtained.<sup>26</sup>

In the Christian milieu, both Scripture and Tradition shaped the belief of the faithful. Abraham, Isaac and the Akedah are mentioned in the New Testament for different purposes. For example, Peter after healing the lame beggar proclaims to the crowd the saving virtue of having faith in Jesus:

“You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God gave to your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your posterity shall all the families of the earth be blessed’ (Gen 22:18). God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you in turning every one of you from your wickedness” (Acts 3:25-6).<sup>27</sup>

Another example is found in the Letter to the Hebrews where the author exhorts the Christians to remain faithful while facing suffering and persecution. He provides examples of

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offered...this interpretation emphasizes Isaac's willingness to be sacrificed. It also associates Genesis 22 with martyrdom...Isaac is depicted as an exemplary martyr...”

<sup>24</sup> Huizenga, *Isaac*, 122. Vermès, “Redemption,” 198: In 4 Maccabees, Isaac is a proto-martyr.

<sup>25</sup> Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 180-1: Mekhilta-de-Rabbi Ishmael, a midrashic work redacted most likely about the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, identifies Isaac's blood with that of the paschal lamb. Vermès, “Redemption,” 206-7: The effects of the blood of the binding of Isaac (Mekhilta I, pp. 57, 88, 222-3): “a) the first born of Israel were saved at the time of the first Passover; b) the Israelites were saved when they entered the Red Sea; c) Jerusalem was saved from the Destruction Angel after the sinful census of David.”

<sup>26</sup> Vermès, “Redemption,” 219-20.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 221: The targumic tradition attributes this blessing to Isaac's sacrifice, but Peter reinterprets it referring to Jesus. The theology of Redemption is transmitted and conveyed through OT quotations. The blessings promised to Abraham's descendant are fulfilled in the account of Jesus' sacrifice.

faith from the Old Testament. Among many, the author mentions Abraham's faith in God as he offers Isaac, his only begotten son, the son of the promise of whom it was said: "for through Isaac shall your descendants be named" (Gen 21:12). As a result of his unfailing faith, Abraham symbolically [παραβολή] receives Isaac back from the dead.<sup>28</sup> James, in his epistle, associates Genesis 15:6 ("Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness") with the Akedah. Abraham's faith is at work to illustrate "that man is justified by works and not by faith alone" (Jas 2:22-24).<sup>29</sup> Paul also, in his Letter to the Romans, focuses on the gift of God, "who did not spare his own Son [τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο]," (Rom 8:32), alluding to Abraham: "you did not spare your beloved son [οὐκ ἐφείσω τοῦ υἱοῦ σου τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ]" (Gen 22:12, 16 LXX). Yet, Paul does not make any direct reference to Isaac's self-offering.<sup>30</sup> Matthew, in his Gospel, also has allusions to Genesis 22, e.g., when he describes the scene of the baptism of Jesus Christ. Jesus in the baptismal narrative is called the beloved Son of God, as Isaac was the beloved son of Abraham. Also, both Matthew and Genesis share the same phrase when expressing the heavenly voice: ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν ... ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός (Matt 3:17) and ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ... τοῦ υἱοῦ σου τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ (Gen 22:11-12, 15).<sup>31</sup> Other allusions to Genesis 22 are noted in the scene in the garden of Gethsemane.<sup>32</sup> These correlations illustrate the possibility that

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<sup>28</sup> Edward Kessler, *Bound by the Bible*, 64: concerning the letter to the Hebrews "the Akedah exemplified a trial of faith, in which Abraham was proven through his obedience and trust...his ability to overcome his test provided strong encouragement to Christians who were facing tribulations." François-Marie Braun, *Jean Le Theologien: Sa Théologie*, vol. 3, *Le mystère de Jésus-Christ*, EBib (Paris: Gabalda, 1966), 159: "le passage de l'épître *aux Hebreux* où Isaac, le μονογενής (Heb 11:17), offert et retrouvé, figure ἐν παραβολῇ le Christ mort et ressuscité (11:19) est le plus caractéristique: le verbe προσέφερεν (11:17) a été choisi à dessein pour rappeler la προσφορά associée à la θυσία (10:5), aux ὀλοκαυτώματα, aux sacrifices expiatoires περὶ ἁμαρτίας (10:6); c'est-à-dire l'oblation du corps de Jesus Christ, offert une fois pour toutes (10:10) en vue de la remission du péché (10:18; cf. 5:2)."

<sup>29</sup> Kessler, *Bound by the Bible*, 61.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 121-3: "Paul did not view Isaac as a figure of Jesus like, for example, Adam (Rom 5:14), because Isaac was not a figure of faith. Rather, his importance lay in his being the son of the figure of faith, Abraham."

<sup>31</sup> Huizenga, *Isaac*, 153-4.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 250-2: Some examples highlighted by Huizenga: in Gethsemane, Jesus commands his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray" (Matt 26:36). Similarly in Gen 22:5, Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here...I and the lad will go yonder and worship." Jesus also instructs his disciples to pray: "that you may not enter into temptation [εἰς πειρασμόν]" (Matt 26:41); in Gen 22:19 God tested [ἐπειράσε] Abraham (LXX). In the arrest of

in the first century, Isaac was seen as a type of Jesus. Lastly, John in his Gospel expresses the perfect love of God for humanity: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whoever believe in Him should not perish but should have eternal life” (John 3:16). Some scholars correlate this verse with the Akedah.<sup>33</sup>

In the writings of the Fathers of the Church, Clement of Rome (first century) mentions Abraham as a model of faith and righteousness. In his obedience to God, Abraham offers his son Isaac as a sacrifice on the mountain.<sup>34</sup> Isaac, according to Clement’s words, gladly goes to be sacrificed in all confidence, knowing what was about to happen.<sup>35</sup> Then, from the second century on, the association of God the Father with Abraham and Jesus the Son with Isaac becomes more common in the writings of the Fathers of the Church. The typology of Jesus “the Lamb of God” being the new Isaac as well as being the ram became more evident through patristic interpretations of scripture.<sup>36</sup> Whereas in the Jewish traditions, the rabbis portray the ram as representing Isaac, the Church Fathers describe the ram as ransoming Isaac.<sup>37</sup>

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Jesus: “Then they [the crowd] came up and laid hands on Jesus [ἐπέβαλον τὰς χεῖρας ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν]” (Matt 26:50) and the angel in Gen 22:12 said to Abraham: “do not lay your hand on the lad [μὴ ἐπιβάλῃς τὴν χεῖρα σου ἐπὶ τὸ παιδάριον]. Finally, one of Jesus’ disciples “stretched out his hand and drew his sword” (Matt 26:51), while in Gen 22:10, Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife.

<sup>33</sup> Kessler, *Bound by the Bible*, 122, n. 20: Kessler expresses the opinion on John 3:16 of R. J. Daly, “The Soteriological Significance of the Sacrifice of Isaac,” *CBQ* 39 (1977): 45-75. Daly, 68, argued that John was influenced by the early Jewish interpretation of the Akedah. Kessler does not deny this possibility, rather he points out that the verse’s “focus is on God giving up his most precious gift, and the reference to the Akedah is, at best, an allusion.” Vermès, “Redemption,” 225: “The fourth Gospel emphasizes two traditional expressions... of the one fundamental reality; namely the sacrifice of the new Isaac, the ‘son of God.’ He then proceeds by saying that “the fullest Johannine expression of the Christian Akedah appears in John 3:16.” Braun, *Jean Le Theologien*, 157, makes a correlation between Gen 22:1-12 and John 3:16: “1) dans le fait qu’un fils unique a été livré à la mort par son père; 2) que ce fils est celui dont dépendaient les promesses de l’Alliance (Gen 17:19); 3) que l’extension de cette Alliance à toutes les nations de la terre provient du sacrifice de l’unique.”

<sup>34</sup> 1 Clem 10:7.

<sup>35</sup> 1 Clem 31:3. Huizenga, *Isaac*, 126, n. 74, considers 1 Clem 31:3 to be “the earliest unambiguous Christian reference to a willing Isaac.”

<sup>36</sup> Kuruvilla, *Aqedah*, 493. See Kessler, *Bound by the Bible*, 141-3, for the comparison between the ram and Christ in the writings of the Greek Fathers.

<sup>37</sup> Kessler, *Bound by the Bible*, 144: “When the rabbis interpreted the words ‘And he sacrificed it instead of his son,’ they portrayed Abraham asking God” to regard the blood of the ram and its ashes as though they were of Isaac.

#### IV. The Tamid

In ancient Jewish understanding, many of the sacrifices offered in the temple were associated with the Akedah, in particular the Tamid, the daily morning and evening sacrifices.<sup>38</sup>

In the Pentateuch, God commands Moses:

“This is the offering by fire which you shall offer to the Lord: two male lambs [שְׁנֵי אֵילִים, ἄμνός] a year old without blemish, day by day, as a continual offering. The one lamb you shall offer in the morning [בֶּקֶר], the other lamb you shall offer in the evening [עֶרְבָיִם]” (Num 28:3-4; cf. Exod 29:38-9). “It shall be a continual burnt offering [עֹלֹת תָּמִיד] throughout your generations at the door of the tent of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet with you, to speak there to you” (Exod 29:42).

The obedience of Abraham brought blessings to all his descendants. The site of the sacrifice in the land of Moriah (Gen 22:2) became the permanent place where many sacrifices would be offered and accepted by God. Centuries later “Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah where the Lord had appeared [נִרְאָה] to David his father” (2 Chr 3:1).<sup>39</sup> The Tamid, which was offered by the priests at the doorway of the tent of meeting, became the daily ordinance. During the second temple worship, the sacrifice formerly offered in the evening was now presented at three o’clock.<sup>40</sup>

In the first century AD, this Jewish tradition was also echoed in the work of Josephus. He attests to the daily sacrificial offering by the priests during the siege of Jerusalem. They observed God’s law and “still twice each day, in the morning and about the ninth hour offer their sacrifices

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<sup>38</sup> Vermès, “Redemption,” 208-11, concludes after treating multiple Rabbinic writings and Targums that “according to ancient Jewish theology, the atoning efficacy of the Tamid offering ... and perhaps, basically all expiatory sacrifice ... depended upon the virtue of the Akedah...the perfect victim of the perfect burnt offering.”

<sup>39</sup> Levenson, *Death and Resurrection*, 174: “in the word Moriah in 2 Chr 3:1 lies the germ of the rabbinic notion that the Akedah is the origin of the daily lamb offering Tamid”; 115: “the ‘mount of the Lord’ can be a title of Zion ... (see, for example Isa 2:2-4)...the Akedah serves as the foundation ... for the great temple of YHWH in Jerusalem.”

<sup>40</sup> See Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC-AD 135)*, ed. Géza Vermès et al., 3 vols, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973), 2:299-301, for a detailed history on the Tamid and temple worship. Also, the original traditional evening sacrifice was at dusk [בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים], but subsequently it became customary to offer the evening sacrifice at three o’clock.



on the altar” (*Ant.* 14.65). To the Hellenistic world of Alexandria and to the Jews in diaspora, Philo connects the sacrifice of Isaac with the Tamid offering. He explains that Abraham “like a priest of sacrifice himself, did himself begin to perform the sacred rite ... perhaps, according to the usual law and custom of burnt offerings, he was intending to solemnize the rite by dividing his son limb by limb” (*Abr.* 198). In his work ‘On the Special Laws’, Philo states that each of the two lambs offered had specific meanings as a “sacrifice of thanksgiving; the one for the kindnesses which have been bestowed during the day, and the other for the mercies which have been vouchsafed in the night, which God is incessantly and uninterruptedly pouring upon the race of men” (*Spec.* 1.169). Philo understands the Tamid as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God that involves not only the people of Israel but rather the whole human race.

In the Christian milieu in the first century AD, many scholars say that no explicit correlation was made between the Tamid and Jesus. The synoptic Gospels provide some allusions to its association with the passion and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In particular, the Gospel of Mark provides more specific temporal indications concerning Jesus’ passion, where a possible correlation can be made. For example, the Tamid lamb is sacrificed at the third hour, which is also the same time of Jesus’ crucifixion, “And it was the third hour, when they crucified Him” (Mark 15:25). Furthermore, Jesus dies in the ninth hour when the second Tamid lamb is also sacrificed: “And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice ... and breathed His last” (Mark 15:34-37).

From a lexical point of view, the precise Hebrew word for lamb used for the Tamid is [כֶּבֶד] and in Greek [ἀμνός], which etymologically corresponds to the title given to Christ in John’s Gospel. From a theological point of view, Jesus is the absolute perfection as the unblemished lamb of the Tamid. Through His passion and death on the cross, He is the perpetual

sacrifice that provides access to God. Therefore, comparing Jesus to the Tamid lambs is done only in the light of Christ's death and resurrection.<sup>41</sup>

## V. The Scapegoat

On the Day of Atonement in the Book of Leviticus, God commands Moses:

“And Aaron shall offer the bull as sin offering for himself...then he shall take the two goats and...shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for Azazel. And Aaron shall present the goat [שְׁעִיר, ἀμνος] on which the lot fell for the Lord, and offer it as a sin offering; but the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it, that it may be sent [שְׁלַח] away into the wilderness to Azazel” (Lev 16:6-10).

For on “this day shall atonement [יִכָּפֵר] be made for you to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the Lord” (Lev 16:30). Yom Kippur [יום כיפור] is considered the holiest day celebrated yearly in Judaism. The high priest would lay both hands over the head of the scapegoat and confess over him the sins of Israel. Then the scapegoat is sent away in the wilderness carrying the transgressions and impurities of Israel.<sup>42</sup>

Josephus defines the scapegoat that is sent alive into the wilderness “to be an expiation for the sins of the whole multitude” (*Ant.* 3.241). For his part, Philo describes the importance of the Day of Atonement as a “Sabbath of Sabbath” (*Spec.* 2.194), a day of fast, prayers and supplications (2.195), in which Israel seeks God's mercy and forgiveness, not “for their merits rather through God's compassion” (2.196).

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<sup>41</sup> Christopher W. Skinner, “Another Look at ‘the Lamb of God,’” *BSac* 161 (2004): 91-2: the author explains the lexical similarity as well as the theological correspondence. He provides “three areas the Tamid interpretation offers valid theological correspondence: Jesus' absolute perfection, the cross of Christ presented as both a sacrifice for sins and as a vicarious experience providing access to God.” Kuruvilla, *Aqedah*, 494, states that the precise Hebrew word for Lamb is כֶּבֶשׂ not שֶׁה which is a generic term for an animal from the flock.

<sup>42</sup> Charles L. Feinberg, “The Scapegoat of Leviticus Sixteen,” *BSac* 115 (1958): 323-24, refers to the regulations for the scapegoat that were carried out in Israel when the Second Temple was in existence. The ritual must incorporate three basic factors: “First, both goats are called a ‘sin offering.’ Secondly, the live goat was as much dedicated and set apart to the Lord as the sacrificial goat... Finally, the live goat was meant to picture to Israel the complete removal of their transgressions from the presence of the Lord.”

Among Christian writings in the first century AD is the Epistle of Barnabas. The author in chapter 7 vividly refers to the image of the scapegoat as a type of Jesus:

Observe what He commanded: *Take a pair of goats, shapely and like each other, and offer them; and let the priest take the one for a whole burnt offering for sins. But what are they to do with the other? The other, He says shall be accursed — note how Jesus is prefigured by it! — and spit upon it, all of you, stab it, and put scarlet wool about its head; and so let it be driven into the desert...* Now what does this mean? Pay attention: the one is to be placed on the altar, the other to be cursed; and note the one accursed is wreathed, because on that Day they are going to see Him wearing the flowing robe of scarlet... And why is the one “like” the other? The reason why *the goats* were to be *like each other, shapely* and of *equal build*, is that when they see Him coming on that Day, they shall be struck at the sight of his likeness to the goat (Barn. 7:6-10).<sup>43</sup>

The synoptic Gospels do not provide definite imagery concerning the scapegoat sacrifice and the passion of Christ. Yet some scholars detect allusions to such: in Matthew’s account of the passion we read that two men are brought before the people, “Barabbas and Jesus who is called Christ” (Matt 27:17). Barnabas, in his epistle, notes the similarity between the two figures (Barn. 7:10). Jesus of Nazareth will be put to death after being mocked, scourged and stripped and a scarlet robe was placed upon him (Matt 27:28-30; cf. Barn. 7). Interestingly, though Mark and Matthew have similar passion narratives, yet Matthew describes the color of Christ’s cloak not as being purple [πικροφύρα] (Mark 15:17) but as scarlet [κοκκίνα] (Matt 27:28), which is the equivalent of [זהורית] (Mishnah Yoma 6:6). Also, the accounts of both Mark and Matthew agree

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<sup>43</sup> James A. Kleist, trans., *The Didache, The Epistle of Barnabas, The Epistles and the Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, The Fragments of Papias, The Epistle to Diognetus*, ACW 6 (New York: Paulist, 1948), 47-8. Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, “Fasting with Jews, Thinking with Scapegoats: Some Remarks on Yom Kippur in Early Judaism and Christianity, in Particular 4Q541, Barnabas 7, Matthew 27 and Acts 27,” in *The Day of Atonement: Its Interpretations in Early Jewish and Christian Traditions*, eds. Thomas Hieke and Tobias Nicklas, TBN 15 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 174-6: In the epistle of Barnabas, the scapegoat makes his way through the desert by passing through the people who mistreat him; 177-8: the author provides a possible connection between the protagonist in 4Q541 and the scapegoat: “In 4Q541 the full sentence reads ‘and he will atone [ויכפר] for all his generation and be sent [וישתלח] out to all his people.’... The verb [שלח] hitp. does not appear in the Bible and is very rarely employed in Second Temple Hebrew and Aramaic. 4Q541 is the only text in Aramaic... Jewish literature, frequently expresses ideas through juxtaposition. If ‘to atone’ [ויכפר] is followed by the rare verb [וישתלח] that is usually part of a *terminus technicus* linked to atonement it is difficult to explain this combination otherwise than in the sense that the author of 4Q541 wants to allude to the scapegoat, one of the most famous means of atonement in Second Temple Judaism.”

on the words of Jesus in the Last Supper scene: “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many” yet Matthew adds “for the forgiveness of sins” (Mark 14:24; cf. Matt 26:28). The atoning effect of the pouring of the blood of the goat on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:15-16) is a figure of the atoning effect of the blood of Jesus.<sup>44</sup>

In the writings of the New Testament, Christ is the “great high priest” (Heb 4:14) and through his atoning sacrifice, he is “the expiation for our sins...but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). Christ is both the high priest and the sacrifice “once for all when He offered Himself” (Heb 7:27). While keeping in mind that both goats were for sin offering, the scapegoat is not a lamb (ἀμνός) but a goat (χίμαρος). The atoning work of the scapegoat as with the Tamid can be explained only in the light of the crucifixion of Jesus.<sup>45</sup>

The theme of charging an animal or a person with the sin or transgression of a group for atonement evokes the poem of the suffering servant of Isaiah: “God has laid on him the iniquities of us all” (Isa 53:6).

## **VI. The Suffering Servant**

In the first century AD, the poem of the suffering servant of Isaiah (Isa 52:13–53:12) was a subject of controversy in its interpretation by the Jewish and Christian communities. In summary, the poem speaks about the servant of the Lord or “my servant” [יְדָבָר, παῖς μου] who “shall be exalted [ὑψωθήσεται] and lifted up [i.e., glorified: δοξασθήσεται] and shall be very high” (52:13). He shall “startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouth because of him” (52:15a). Yet the servant is portrayed as being despised and rejected (53:3), wounded and bruised (53:5a), oppressed and afflicted (53:7a), and buried with the wicked (53:9a). But the

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<sup>44</sup> Stökl Ben Ezra, “Fasting with Jews,” 180-83.

<sup>45</sup> Skinner, “Another Look,” 92, n. 8; Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 146: “This accords well with the thought of the taking away of sin...but the scapegoat was not a lamb.”

servant has done no wrong nor spoken any falsehood (53:9b). The speaker of the poem collectively called “we” states that the servant “was struck down by God and afflicted” (53:4b). But “we” came to understand what he did for our sake and how he was wounded and bruised by our transgressions and our iniquities (53:5a). Through “his stripes we were healed” (53:5b). The servant, accepting suffering, was like a “lamb [לַשֶּׁה] that is led to the slaughter [לְטַבַּח],<sup>46</sup> and like a sheep [רֹחֵל] that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth” (53:7b). Yet it was “the will of the Lord to bruise him,” and the servant made of himself a sin offering [אֲשָׁמָה] (53:10). And by “his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities” [בְּדַעְתּוֹ יִצְדִיק צְדִיק עַבְדִּי לְרַבִּים] (53:11).<sup>47</sup>

This poem speaks of the silent suffering of the Servant of God who voluntarily accepted injustice for the sake of others. His death has a redemptive value for the multitude. His ordeal is a means of healing and justification for many.<sup>48</sup>

In the first century AD, there were different interpretations regarding the identity of the servant.<sup>49</sup> Some passages can be attributed to the Messiah (52:13, 15) or to “messianic prophecies.” Yet there is no explicit mention of the word “Messiah” meaning “the Lord’s

<sup>46</sup> D. Brent Sandy, “John the Baptist’s ‘Lamb of God’ Affirmation in its Canonical and Apocalyptic Milieu,” *JETS* 34 (1991): 450: “Isaiah is not referring to sacrificial slaughter” [זֶבַח]; instead “Isaiah uses [טַבַּח], which is a slaughter for food.” For example, Jeremiah says of himself that he was “like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter [טַבַּח]” (Jer 11:19).

<sup>47</sup> The Septuagint’s translation for verse 7: “He was a sheep [πρόβατον] led to the slaughter and a lamb [ἀμνός] before the shearer.” For verse 11: “and to form [him] with understanding; to justify the just one who serves many well [δικαιῶσαι δίκαιον εἰς δουλεύοντα πολλοῖς]; and he shall bear their sins.”

<sup>48</sup> Michel Gourgues, “‘Mort pour nos péchés selon les Écritures’: Que reste-t-il chez Jean du Credo des origines? In 1:29, chânon unique de continuité,” in *The Death of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. G. Van Belle, BETL 200. (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 184: “Ce passage ... le seul, de l’Ancien Testament à parler de la mort d’une personne humaine comme possédant valeur rédemptrice par rapport aux péchés des multitudes.”

<sup>49</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 414: “Jeremias (*TDNT*, 5.684-89) has shown that three different interpretations were used in Palestinian Judaism in the first millennium AD: (a) the collective interpretation, in which [παῖς θεοῦ] was understood of Israel as a whole; (b) an individual interpretation, in which it was understood (esp. in Isa 49:5 and 50:10) to refer to the prophet himself; and (c) an individual interpretation, in which it came to be applied to *Elias redivivus* (Sir 48:10) or to the Messiah (esp. 52:13 and 53:11 ...).”

anointed” [משיח יהוה]; rather the poem is about the “Servant of the Lord” [עבד יהוה].<sup>50</sup> The Jews did not expect a suffering Messiah. The means by which the servant fulfills his task is through suffering and death, contrary to what was attributed to the Messiah.<sup>51</sup>

In the first century AD, the Christian communities accepted Isaiah 53 as a prophecy referring to Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ. In the book of Acts, when Philip was asked by the Ethiopian eunuch to explain verses 7-8 of the servant song in Isaiah 53 (Acts 8:32-34), “beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news of Jesus” (Acts 8:35).<sup>52</sup> The Servant of the Lord willingly accepts death. Jesus, in his meekness, appearing as a “lamb” led to the slaughter, silent and not opening his mouth, is the one dying for the sins of His people. Many of the Christian writers referred to the Servant as a figure of Jesus Christ: Peter in his First Epistle echoes verses from the Servant song (1 Pet 2:22-25). The Epistle to the Hebrews says that “Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many...” (Heb 9:28).<sup>53</sup> In the Gospels, Christ is pictured keeping silent before the Sanhedrin (Matt 26:63) and also answering nothing to Pilate (John 19:9).<sup>54</sup> Matthew, the Gospel of fulfillment, quotes Jesus in 12:18-21 as fulfilling Isaiah 42:1-4. John cites the suffering servant passage: “Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed” (John 12:38, citing Isa 53:1). He repeatedly recounts the words of Jesus concerning the Son of Man who will be lifted up [ὑψώω] (John 3:14;

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<sup>50</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The One Who Is to Come* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 39-41. Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, translated by G. W. Anderson (Nashville, New York: Abingdon, 1954), 213-25.

<sup>51</sup> Skinner, “Another Look,” 96: “The Jews did not expect a suffering Messiah...no Jewish exegetes before the late second century understood or interpreted the text in this way.” Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 219, 228-30: the author states that several scholars thought the servant to be a king or a royal figure because of many features: being exalted, lifted up very high, or because before him even the great will be silent, kings will shut their mouths at him. The servant has no trace of a political element, which was attributed to the ‘Messiah’ of the OT. The servant’s task is not political, but rather is spiritual. “The servant’s life is his real work” (230).

<sup>52</sup> Gourgues, “Mort pour nos péchés,” 191: “En Ac 8, dans l’épisode de l’eunuque éthiopien, c’est précisément ce passage sur l’agneau qui se trouve cité (8:32-33) et appliqué à Jésus (8:34-35)... [Le] rôle à l’égard du péché [n’est] pas [attribué] au Serviteur ... comme en Is 52-53, mais à l’ἀμώος, auquel le Serviteur est comparé sous l’angle de la soumission.”

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 191: “L’allusion [au quatrième chant (Is 53:12a)] se laisse aisément reconnaître: “...ainsi, le Christ, s’étant offert une seule fois pour enlever le péché des multitudes.”

<sup>54</sup> Boismard, “Lamb of God,” 299.

8:28; 12:32, 34) and glorified [δοξάζω] (7:39; 12:23), connecting Jesus with the servant of the Lord who “will be exalted [ὑψωθήσεται] and glorified [δοξασθήσεται]” (Isa 52:13 LXX).<sup>55</sup>

Among the Fathers of the Church, Clement of Rome exhorts the members of the Corinthian community to conduct a true Christian life in all humility. He recalls Jesus’ humility and suffering, identifying Him with Isaiah’s suffering servant.<sup>56</sup> The first century Christians took Isaiah 53 as a prophecy of their suffering Messiah. Jesus Christ is pictured as the lamb led to the slaughter in his meekness and submission to his death on the cross for the sake of many.

Mention can here be made of the apocalyptic writings, some dated earlier than the first century AD, where the Lamb figure is represented as triumphant over his enemies, for example in the Testament of Benjamin (T.Benj. 3:8) and the Testament of Joseph (T.Jos. 19:8-12).<sup>57</sup> Much was written about the victory of the “lamb” and his everlasting kingdom. Yet his conquering mission was not accomplished through an atoning sacrifice.

## VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has surveyed the most common and accepted views of the background of the “Lamb of God” title. This endeavor has provided a clearer understanding of the perspective in first century Judaism and Christianity. The next chapter will address the exegesis of the pericope containing the “Lamb of God” image in the Gospel of John as well as the contribution of modern scholars.

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<sup>55</sup> Gourgues, “Mort pour nos péchés,” 185: “Ces deux verbes se retrouvent dès le premier verset du quatrième chant du Serviteur...” n. 16: “le verbe [ὑψώω] se retrouve notamment... dans le Kérygme (Ac 2:33; 5:31), où figure également [δοξάζω] (en Ac 3:13 notamment, avec παῖς “serviteur,” comme en Is 52:13).”

<sup>56</sup> 1 Clem 16:3-15.

<sup>57</sup> Sandy, “John the Baptist,” 454.

## CHAPTER II

### The Baptist's Pronouncement "Behold, the Lamb of God": Interpretations of this Image

#### I. Introduction

In the first chapter of John's Gospel, the Evangelist records the testimony of John the Baptist upon seeing Jesus. The Baptist experiences a theophany (John 1:33) and prophesies that Jesus is "the Lamb of God" whose mission is to "take away the sin," not only of Israel, but of "the world" ["ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου"] (John 1:29). The Baptist also attests to the pre-existence of Jesus (John 1:30) and to His being the Son of God (John 1:34). The "Lamb of God" is the "Son of God."

The Baptist's eyewitness account offers a prophetic understanding of Jesus' mission and identity. John, being of priestly lineage, evokes much of Jewish sacrificial tradition by perceiving Jesus as "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29, 36). Years after this pronouncement, the Evangelist purposely introduces the Baptist's testimony as an eyewitness in the beginning of his Gospel as he refers to Jesus' first public appearance.

This chapter is an analysis of the Baptist's testimony with an exploration of the meaning of Jesus' "Lamb of God" title. This will be accomplished by first reviewing the historical figure of John the Baptist, and then through an exegesis of the specific pericope and its theological implications. The different claims by Johannine scholars who have analyzed the meaning of this title will also be discussed. The heart of the chapter will be a discussion of the title "Lamb of God." Later sections of the chapter will deal with the other title of Jesus in the pericope, namely the "Son of God" or according to some manuscripts, the "Chosen One" of God.



## II. The Ministry of John the Baptist: A Historical Perspective

While John's Gospel focuses mainly on the Baptist's testimony regarding Jesus, the Synoptics provide detailed information concerning John's ministry as it begins:

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas...(Luke 3:1-2).<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of this occupation of the Jewish nation by Rome, "the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah" (Luke 3:2; cf. Jer 1:1-2, 4; 13:3; Isa 38:1, 4; Hos 1:1).<sup>2</sup> This suggests that John started his public ministry in the year AD 28-29. God's call comes in the desert where John has been for some time (Luke 1:80). John is given a mission to preach a "baptism of repentance [μετάνοια]" for "the forgiveness of sins" (Luke 3:3 cf. Mark 1:4; Acts 13:24). He proclaims the reason for repentance "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:2). "Repentance" [μετάνοια], leading to an internal conversion and a radical change in one's life, is accompanied with an external sign of purification: "Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings" (Isaiah 1:16; cf. 2 Kings 5:10; Ps. 51:7; Acts 22:16). However, unlike the Jewish purification rituals bath using a Mikvah [מִקְוָה], John's baptism seems to be a one-time event.<sup>3</sup> "Forgiveness of sins" as a result of conversion, fulfills the angel Gabriel's foretelling of John's mission (Luke 1:77).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Luke T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, Sacra Pagina 3 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 64-5: Luke in his Gospel, not only attaches the setting of John's ministry to the world culture but he also emphasizes this fact: Israel is divided into four provinces politically and geographically.

<sup>2</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke. I. 1:1-9:50*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 1994), 284-6: the call narrative found in this passage mimics that of an OT prophet called in a time of crisis to deliver a message to God's people. It is customary in the OT to mention the father of the prophet.

<sup>3</sup> David L. Jeffrey, *Luke*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2012), 56-7, states that the Greek word [μετάνοια] (repentance) relates to Hebrew [שׁוּב] (to turn) found in OT passages (Isa 6:10; cf. Amos 4:6-8).

<sup>4</sup> Bock, *Luke*, 289.

John, filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:15, 44), is presented in the Gospels as an itinerant preacher whose ministry is in the wilderness by the Jordan River (Matt 3:6; Mark 1:5; Luke 3:3). The Evangelists cite the prophecy of Isaiah as being fulfilled in John, which also clarifies John's presence in the wilderness (Isa 40:3; cf. Mark 1:3; Matt. 3:3; Luke 3:3-6; John 1:23). Furthermore, in the Gospels of both Matthew and Mark, John is dressed like Elijah, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Malachi (Malachi 4:5; cf. 2 Kings 1:8; Matt 3:4; Mark 1:6). Luke uses the prophecy of Malachi as part of the announcement of Gabriel to Zechariah (Malachi 4:5-6; cf. Luke 1:16-17).

Josephus also attests to John the Baptist and his ministry:

“A good man [who] commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him...not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of sins [only] but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness.” *Ant.* 18.117.

Josephus provides us with a detailed description of Perea (*J.W.* 3.44-47), known in the Gospel as the area “beyond the Jordan” (John 1:28; cf. Matt 4:25; Mark 3:8). “Beyond the Jordan,” was also the place where John was baptizing [ταῦτα ἐν Βηθανίᾳ ἐγένετο πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου ὅπου ἦν ὁ Ἰωάννης βαπτίζων] (John 1:28). Herod Antipas ruled this region as mentioned earlier. Regarding John's death at the hands of this ruler, as indeed we read in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 14:1-12; Mark 6:16-29; Luke 9:7-9), Josephus goes on to recount certain details. His testimony is regarded as authentic, and he provides us with some specifics regarding John's incarceration that we do not find in the Gospels:

“Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise), thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause...Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of

Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death." *Ant.* 18.118-119.

### **III. The Literary Structure of John 1**

The first chapter of John's Gospel can be divided into three structural sections: the prologue (John 1:1-18), the testimony of John (John 1:19-34), and the succession of the first disciples (John 1:35-51).<sup>5</sup>

#### ***The Prologue (John 1:1-18)***

The prologue is characterized by high Christological themes. Among them, Jesus is identified as the Word [ὁ λόγος] and the only-begotten Son [μονογενοῦς] (John 1:1, 14). Jesus' relationship with the Father is also expressed [ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν] (John 1:1). He is the "exegesis" of the Father (John 1:18). The narrative of the Prologue includes "interpolations" with John's testimony (John 1:6-8, 15).

#### ***The Testimony of John (John 1:19-34)***

This section is divided into two pericopes by the time frame of two days (John 1:19-28 and 1:29-34).

In the first pericope, John tells the priests and Levites *who* he is. He testifies that he is not the Christ or Elijah or the prophet; rather, he describes himself as the voice crying in the wilderness (John 1:20-23). When asked by the Pharisees *why* he baptizes, he answers that he baptizes with water and goes on to refer to an unknown figure that will come after him (John 1:27). Two aspects are central in this passage: the identity and the actions of John, but the reason for his actions is not yet clear.

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<sup>5</sup> Reimund Bieringer, "Das Lamm Gottes, das die Sünde der Welt hinwegnimmt (Joh 1,29): Eine kontextorientierte und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung auf dem Hintergrund der Passatradition als Deutung des Todes Jesu im Johannesevangelium," in *The Death of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. G. Van Belle, BETL 200 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 213.

In the second pericope, John upon seeing Jesus makes a pronouncement: “this is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Interestingly, the Evangelist reiterates some of the statements of the previous pericope, but in a reverse order thus creating a concentric structure in which 1:29 is the centerpiece.<sup>6</sup>

A 1,25 καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτὸν καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῶ·  
τί οὖν βαπτίζεις εἰ σὺ οὐκ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς οὐδὲ Ἡλίας οὐδὲ ὁ προφήτης;  
 1,26 ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰωάννης λέγων·  
ἐγὼ βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι·

B 1,26c μέσος ὑμῶν ἔστηκεν **ὃν ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε,**

C 1,27 *ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος,*

οὗ οὐκ εἰμι [ἐγὼ] ἄξιος

ἵνα λύσω αὐτοῦ τὸν ἱμάντα τοῦ ὑποδήματος.

(1,28 ταῦτα ἐν Βηθανία ἐγένετο πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, ὅπου ἦν ὁ Ἰωάννης βαπτίζων.)

**D 1,29 Τῆ ἐπαύριον βλέπει τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτὸν  
 καὶ λέγει·**

**Ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ**

**ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου.**

C' 1,30 οὗτός ἐστιν ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εἶπον·

*ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεται ἀνὴρ*

ὃς ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν,

ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν.

B' 1,31a **καὶ ἐγὼ οὐκ ᾔδειν αὐτόν,**

A' 1,31b ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῇ τῷ Ἰσραὴλ  
διὰ τοῦτο ἦλθον ἐγὼ ἐν ὕδατι βαπτίζων.

A 1,25-26 Question: Why do you baptize? preliminary answer: I baptize with water

B 1,26c A figure unknown to the addressee

C 1,27 Testimony of John referring to the one who is coming after him  
 (1,28 Location)

D 1,29 Jesus appears

Testimony of John: Behold the Lamb of God  
 who takes away the sin of the world

C' 1,30 Testimony of John referring to the one who is coming after him

B' 1,31a A figure unknown to John

A' 1,31b Response: the revelation of Jesus to Israel is the aim of the water baptism of John

John has now fully answered the question of *why* he is baptizing (John 1:25; cf. 1:31).

<sup>6</sup> Bieringer, “Das Lamm Gottes,” 213-16.

Yet this response indicates that the Pharisees were asking the wrong question (John 1:24). It is not about *who* John is and *what* he does; rather, it is about *who* Jesus is and *what* he does. This concentric structure is partially superimposed by a second concentric structure (John 1:29-34). Here, John tells us how he learned about Jesus. This statement underlines the special relationship between Jesus and God (cf. Spirit, dove, heaven). The center of this concentric structure is the Spirit baptism of Jesus (John 1:32).

A 1,29c Τῆ ἐπαύριον βλέπει τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ λέγει· ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ

B 1,29d ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου.

C 1,30a οὗτός ἐστιν ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εἶπον·

30b ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεται ἀνὴρ

30c ὃς ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν,

30d ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν.

D 1,31a κἀγὼ οὐκ ᾔδειν αὐτόν,

31b ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῇ τῷ Ἰσραὴλ

31c διὰ τοῦτο ἦλθον ἐγὼ ἐν ὕδατι βαπτίζων.

**E 32a Καὶ ἐμαρτύρησεν Ἰωάννης λέγων ὅτι**

**32b τεθέαμαι τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον ὡς περιστερὰν ἐξ**

**32c οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐπ' αὐτόν.**

D' 1,33a κἀγὼ οὐκ ᾔδειν αὐτόν,

33b ἀλλ' ὁ πέμψας με βαπτίζειν ἐν ὕδατι

33c ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν·

33d ἐφ' ὃν ἂν ἴδῃς τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον καὶ μένον ἐπ' αὐτόν,

B' + C' 1,33e οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ βαπτίζων ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

A' 1,34 κἀγὼ ἐώρακα καὶ μεμαρτύρηκα ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.

A 1,29c Testimony of John reveals Jesus' identity: "the Lamb of God"

B 1,29d Testimony of John reveals Jesus' action: to take away the sin of the world

C 1,30a, b, c, d Testimony of John leads to the identification of Jesus by the audience

D 1,31a, b, c John repeats that he did not know him

the revelation of Jesus to Israel is the object of the water baptism of John

E 1,32a, b, c Testimony of John: Jesus is the Spirit-receiver and bearer

D' 1,33a, b, c, d John repeats that he did not know him

John was foretold of Jesus through divine revelation

B'+ C' 1,33e Testimony of God leads to the identification of Jesus by John

God's Testimony reveals Jesus' action: to baptize with the Holy Spirit

A' 1,34 Testimony of John reveals Jesus' identity: "the Son of God"

The Evangelist, by using a historical flashback, reveals that the testimony of John is founded on a direct revelation of God and, therefore is absolutely reliable. He also reveals God's testimony to Jesus and the identification of Jesus by John (John 1:33). The text reaches its climax through the solemn testimony of John, "Jesus is the Son of God" (John 1:34).<sup>7</sup>

### ***The Succession of the First Disciples (John 1:36-51)***

This section is also divided into two pericopes by the time frame of two days (John 1:35-42 and 1:43-51).

In the first pericope Jesus gains his first disciples (John 1:35-42). John proclaims to two of his followers that Jesus is the "Lamb of God" (John 1:36). They listen to the Baptist's witness and follow Jesus (John 1:37-38).<sup>8</sup> Later on, Andrew's witness brings Simon to Jesus (John 1:40-42).<sup>9</sup>

In the second pericope, Jesus gains two more disciples (John 1:43-51). After Jesus finds Philip and asks him to "follow me," Philip finds Nathanael and through his witness, leads him to Jesus (John 1:43, 45-48).<sup>10</sup> Notably, Nathanael calls Jesus the "Son of God" and he immediately adds the "King of Israel" (John 1:49; cf. 1:34; 19:14, 19).<sup>11</sup> Jesus, addressing Nathanael in a solemn manner "Truly, truly, I say to you..." recalls the image from Jacob's vision (John 1:51; cf. Gen 28:12). Later on Jacob "called the name of the place where God had spoken with him,

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<sup>7</sup> Bieringer, "Das Lamm Gottes," 216-221.

<sup>8</sup> Bieringer, "Das Lamm Gottes," 226-27, parallels the disciples who listen and follow Jesus who goes before them as reminiscent of a shepherd-sheep relationship in which the shepherd knows the sheep by name and they follow him (John 1:37-38, 40-42; cf. 10:3-4, 27). Jesus is the Lamb (John 1:36) and is described as a shepherd (John 1:37-38; cf. 10:11). This mutual relationship of shepherd and sheep is compared to that of the Father and Son (John 10:14-15).

<sup>9</sup> Carson, *John*, 155: "the first thing Andrew did was to find his brother and announce we have found the Messiah ... the most common and effective Christian testimony is the private witness of friend to friend, brother to brother."

<sup>10</sup> Carson, *John*, 158-9, states that the foundational principle of Christian expansion is "that the new followers of Jesus bear witness of him to others, who in turn become disciples and repeat the process."

<sup>11</sup> Bieringer, "Das Lamm Gottes," 227-28: in the OT some of the kings of Israel are described as false shepherds and God Himself takes the role of true shepherd (Jer 23:1-8; Ezek 34:1-31).

Bethel” [i.e. house of God] (Gen 35:15). Jesus informs Nathanael and the other disciples that they will see a new Bethel, a new house of God, through the Son of Man.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the witness of John that Jesus is “Lamb of God” and “Son of God” has been successfully handed on to Jesus’ disciples in this section.

This brings to completion the literary structure of the first chapter of John’s Gospel. What follows next is an analysis of the specific pericope (John 1:29-34).

#### **IV. John’s Witness to the People (John 1:29-34)**

In John’s Gospel, the Baptist’s testimonies regarding Jesus are recorded in the first days of Jesus’ public ministry (John 1:19-51). John the Baptist witnesses to a series of people: first to the Jewish leaders (John 1:19-28), then to the people who came to hear him (John 1:29-34), and finally to certain disciples (John 1:35-42) so “that all might believe through him” (John 1:7).<sup>13</sup> A theme of “the next day” (John 1:29, 35, 43; cf. 2:1 “on the third day”) occurs after the testimony of John the Baptist in “Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing” (1:19-28).<sup>14</sup>

The pericope is a narrative with several pronouncements concerning Jesus, which John [the Baptist] proclaims as an eyewitness. In this short scene, the Baptist professes high Christological themes: Jesus is the “Lamb of God”; Jesus is the “Baptizer with the Spirit”; and

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<sup>12</sup> Carson, *John*, 162-64.

<sup>13</sup> George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC 36 (Nashville: Nelson, 1999), 22-23: “the narrative [John 1:19-51] provides an account which (a) clarifies the nature of John’s ministry and its relation to that of Jesus, and (b) describes the call of the first disciples and their early confessions of faith in Jesus.” Barrett, “The Lamb of God,” *NTS* 1 (1954-1955), 213: “John may not have thought of himself in this role [Elijah], but to Christians who conceived their faith in apocalyptic terms the identification was inevitable.” Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 134-6. Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, Sacra Pagina 4 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 52: “The Baptist introduces the messianic theme into the interrogation by denying that he is the Messiah” (John 1:20).

<sup>14</sup> The discussion of various theological interpretations of the theme of ‘days’ is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Jesus is the “Son [υἱός] of God,” or according to some manuscripts, the “Chosen One [ἐκλεκτός] of God.”

### ***Lamb of God***

When John saw Jesus, the true light, coming [ἐρχόμενον] (John 1:29; cf. 1:9) to him, he said:<sup>15</sup> “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world [ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου]” (John 1:29). By exploring each word of this powerful statement, one acquires a better understanding of John’s proclamation.

*Behold* [ἴδε] is here considered to be part of a formula of revelation in which a messenger of God, seeing a person, says ‘look’ and the seer discloses the person’s mission. Another example in John’s Gospel is the scene at the foot of the cross: “when Jesus *saw* his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ [Γύναι, ἴδε ὁ υἱός σου]. Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother’ [Ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ σου]” (John 19:26-27). In this encounter, the formula of revelation discloses Mary’s mission as the spiritual mother to all Jesus’ disciples represented by the beloved disciple. In turn, the beloved disciple (representing all the believers) takes Mary into “his own home” [εἰς τὰ ἴδια, literally, ‘into his own’] (John 19:27; cf. John 1:11). This formula was used in the OT, for example “When Samuel *saw* Saul, the LORD told him, ‘Here is the man [ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος in LXX] of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall rule over my people’” (1 Samuel 9:17).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> John F. McHugh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on John 1-4*, ed. Graham Stanton, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 125, n. 29: “The Baptist *sees Jesus coming towards him*...The Baptist *sees Jesus* not just physically, but with a mind enlightened by the true light.”

<sup>16</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols, AB 29, 29A (New York: Doubleday 1966-70), 58. Michel De Goedt, “Un Schème de Révélation dans le Quatrième Évangile,” *NTS* 8 (1962): 142-3: “Il s’agit d’une



*The Lamb of God* [ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ]: Jesus is given a title [ἀμνός]<sup>17</sup> which many scholars have studied in order to fully understand the theological significance of this image within the given text. Some commentators have interpreted it as a possible echo of another passage in the OT: in the narrative of the Akedah (Genesis 22), on the way up the mountain, Isaac asks his father about the lamb for sacrifice (Gen 22:7). Abraham answers, “God will provide [יְרָא] himself the lamb [הַשֶּׁבַע, πρόβατον] for a burnt offering, my son” (Gen 22:8). Abraham’s words were prophetic. Later on God does provide a ram for the burnt offering; Abraham called the place “the Lord will provide [יְרָא יְהוָה]” (Gen 22:14). Therefore, scholars have concluded that when John called Jesus “The Lamb of God,” he might have been referring to God’s provision of the lamb (John 1:29, 36; cf. Gen 22:8). Jesus is the Lamb that God is providing; He is the One sent by God to redeem the world (cf. 3:16).<sup>18</sup> Other scholars have proposed that [ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ] is an allusion to Isaiah’s “Servant of the Lord.” They base this view on their suggestion that [ἀμνός, lamb] is a mistranslation of the Aramaic word [אַלְעָ, lamb, youth] taken in the sense of the Hebrew word [לְאָ, lamb]. However, the Aramaic word [אַלְעָ]

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sorte de schème plutôt que d’une forme littéraire... Un envoyé de Dieu *voit* un personnage (le nom en est indiqué) et *dit*: ‘Voici (suit une appellation par laquelle le “voyant” dévoile le mystère d’une mission, ou d’une destinée).’ La différence formelle entre l’objet de la vision et celui de la présentation marque le caractère oraculaire de celle-ci. Ce schème sert, dans le Quatrième Evangile, à introduire, ou à structurer quatre scènes de révélation [Jean: 1:29-34, 35-39, 47-51; 19: 24b-27]...Le héraut prophétique et le témoin sont, d’après le quatrième Evangile, deux aspects distincts de la figure du Baptiste.”

<sup>17</sup> Joachim Jeremias, “ἀμνός,” *TDNT* 1:338: “Attested from classical times, it is mostly used in the LXX for the Heb [שֶׁבַע], though occasionally for אֶמְרָה, אֶמְרָה, אֶמְרָה, אֶמְרָה, אֶמְרָה. In the NT it occurs 4 times (John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 1:19) and it is always applied to Jesus, who is compared with a lamb as the One who suffers and dies innocently and representatively.”

<sup>18</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 144: the genitive “of God” may mean, “provided by God” (cf. Gen 22:8), or “belonging to God.” Brown, *John*, 55, states that the denotation of the genitive is contingent on the interpretation of the ‘Lamb’: “If the Lamb is the Servant, then John’s phrase is patterned after the Servant of Yahweh. If the Lamb is the paschal lamb, then the genitive may have the sense of being supplied by God.” Richard Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 156: “it is possible that [the lamb of God] echoes yet another passage that uses the link word [שֶׁבַע] [based on the Jewish exegetical principle, *gezerah shavah*] to refer to a sacrificial offering... Only one lamb in the Hebrew Bible is said to be provided by God: the lamb of Gen 22:8.” See 154: *gezerah shavah* (which might be translated “equal category”) means that “passages from different parts of the Scripture that use the same words or phrases can be brought together and interpreted in relation to each other.”

corresponds to the Greek word [παῖς, boy, servant]. Therefore, they concluded that [ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ] represents an Aramaic original [טליה דאלהא] and corresponds to the Hebrew [עבד יהוה], or ‘the Servant of the Lord’ of Isaiah.<sup>19</sup> Some scholars opposed this suggestion by highlighting etymological facts: first, in the LXX [ἀμνός] is never used to translate [טְלֵה]; second, no documented examples are seen of [טְלֵיָא] as being a translation for [עֶבֶד]. Lastly in the Targum of Isaiah the Hebrew word [עֶבֶד] is always translated by using the Aramaic word [עֶבֶד] and so the presence of the word [טְלֵיָא] would not directly bring to mind the Aramaic version of Isaiah.<sup>20</sup> These lexical differences have led some commentators to view this interpretation as least likely.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the Targum of Pseudo–Jonathan in Exod 1:15 explains that Pharaoh

saw in his dream that all the land of Egypt was placed on one balance of weighing-scales, and a lamb [וטליא], the young (of a ewe), on the other balance... and the balance...on which the lamb (was placed) weighed down. Immediately he sent and summoned all the magicians of Egypt and told them his dream... the chief magicians... said to Pharaoh: “A son [ביר] is to be born in the assembly of Israel [דישראל], through whom all the land of Egypt is destined to be destroyed.”

<sup>19</sup> Charles H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 235-36, explains that this view was first proposed by C. J. Ball, “Had the Fourth Gospel an Aramaic Archetype?” *Exp Times* 21 (1909-10), 91-3. Later on, C. F. Burney, *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), 104-8, argued further that the expression [ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ] represents an Aramaic original [טליה דאלהא] that corresponds to the Hebrew phrase ‘the Servant of the Lord’ of Isaiah. Dodd is not in agreement with such an interpretation; he further notes “it is not necessary to adopt Burney’s theory that the Fourth Gospel as a whole was translated from Aramaic, since it is conceivable that a saying attributed to the Baptist may have been handed down in an Aramaic form.” McHugh, *John 1-4*, 133, n. 67, states that this theory, proposed by Ball and Burney, has been accepted by Joachim Jeremias “whose arguments are more subtle, in *TWNT I* 342-45 and V 700.”

<sup>20</sup> Dodd, *Interpretation*, 235, further commented: “Even the Syriac versions go back from [παῖς to עֶבֶד] except where they take it to mean ‘son.’” McHugh, *John 1-4*, 133.

<sup>21</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 149: this analysis “presupposes that whoever put this Aramaic expression into Greek somehow avoided a perfectly common and obvious expression, ‘the servant of the lord’ in order to produce a new and rather strange expression, ‘the lamb of God.’” Morris, *John*, 146: “it is not easy to think that so well known an expression as ‘the Servant of the Lord,’ should be unrecognized, and should be translated by so difficult and unusual a phrase as ‘the lamb of God.’” Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John*, vol.1, trans. Kevin Smyth, ed. J. Massynghaerde Ford and Kevin Smyth (NY: Herder & Herder), 1:300: “John with the Passover in mind and also perhaps the two meanings of [טְלֵיָא] has turned “servant of God” into “lamb of God” to arrive at a concept which contains the two typologies [the servant of God and the Paschal Lamb].” Brown, *John*, 61, is in agreement with Dodd in refuting the suggestion that “Lamb” in John is a mistranslation of [טְלֵיָא] which can mean both “servant” and “lamb.” However, Ball, Burney, Jeremias, Cullman, Boismard and De La Potterie supported this suggestion. Brown further emphasizes, “There seem to be enough indications in the Gospel to connect the Lamb of God and the Suffering Servant.”

Therefore Pharaoh... took counsel and said to the Jewish midwives... if it is a male child, you shall kill him; but if it is a female child, she shall live...<sup>22</sup>

The lamb clearly represents Moses, who in the Scriptures is depicted as the one sent by God to free the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt (Exod 3:10). Through Moses, God both speaks—"I will be your mouth [פִּי]" (Exod 4:12)— and acts, revealing His power in the land of Egypt (Exod 7–12). If the Baptist had testified in Aramaic that Jesus is [טליה דאלהא] and [טליא] was used foretelling Moses, as the Targum just cited, then this expression would bring to mind the memories of a great liberator. The idea then would be that John the Baptist's proclamation [ὁ ἄμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ] may not be connected to Isaiah 53 directly but rather to Moses. Jesus is the new Moses, both lamb and servant.<sup>23</sup>

Lastly, in the search of the theological meaning of "lamb," as different Semitic dialects were common in Palestine in the first century AD, Negoitsa and Daniel provide a notable explanation. They claim that the Syriac text of John 1:29, 36 [*ho' emreh d' aloho* "Behold the Lamb of God"] is ambivalent and a double meaning is evident: [*'emar*] in the absolute state means 'lamb' both written and pronounced as the verb [*'emar*] 'he spoke'. The Syriac is very close to the Aramaic spoken in Palestine during Christ's time. Both scholars conclude that the ambivalence of the word "Lamb" probably also existed in Palestinian Aramaic. In the Aramaic Babylonian Talmud, "lamb" in the emphatic state is [אַמְרָא] but in Hebrew [אִמְרָה] means "word." Following this analysis, they concluded that John, upon seeing Jesus, proclaimed that he is the "Lamb of God" [אַמְרָא]; this proclamation meant both Lamb of God and Word of God [because

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<sup>22</sup> Martin McNamara, ed., *Targums Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, Aramaic Bible 2 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 162. Josephus, *Ant.* 2.206, in the account of this incident, states that these midwives were Egyptians and not Israelites, which is contrary to the narrative in the book of Exodus (Exod 2:15).

<sup>23</sup> Scholars like McHugh, *John 1-4*, 133-4, make further connections to Moses: "When one recalls the strong undercurrents of references to the Covenant of Sinai which alone explain John 1:14, 17-18, one might expect the narrative of the Gospel to open further allusions to another Moses."

the gutturals, the *shewa*, and the final *he* were not pronounced].<sup>24</sup> Du Plessis objects to such interpretations: he clarifies that while a word in the Syrian text is ambivalent, by applying this ambivalence to another language (Aramaic-Hebrew), it may by chance be relevant within the context of the text. For example, if “voilà l’agneau de Dieu” is meant as “voilà le verbe de Dieu” it then harmonizes with the prologue in which “the Word became flesh...” affirming the divinity of Jesus (John 1:14). Also, it explains the reason for which the disciples of John, upon hearing such a pronouncement then followed Jesus (John 1:36-37). Yet the drawback is the assumption that ambivalence in one language necessarily can be reflected in another. He concludes by stating that the question remains concerning John’s use of the word “Lamb” to indicate the “Word of God” and its effect on both the readers and the hearers.<sup>25</sup>

Among other interpretations, Dodd proposed that the title “the Lamb of God” is Messianic, meaning that the “Lamb” [ἀμνός] is a symbol of the Messiah. Dodd explained that a different word for lamb [ἀρνίον] is used throughout the Apocalypse of John as a title for Jesus. The association of violence and power in the book of Revelation with the figure of the lamb is self-contradictory (Rev 6:16; 7:17; 14:1-5; 17:14; etc.). Yet, as Dodd added, it can be explained in the light of the Jewish apocalyptic tradition during the intertestamental period. For example,

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<sup>24</sup> Athanase Negoitsa and Constantin Daniel, “L’agneau de Dieu est le Verbe de Dieu,” *NovT* 13 (1971): 33-6: “Cela étant l’on peut conclure qu’il y a un jeu de mots très clair, une amphibologie intentionnelle dans les paroles araméennes prononcées par St. Jean Baptiste lorsqu’il vit Jésus, paroles que St. Jean l’évangéliste reproduit en grec. En effet le terme ‘agneau’ a un double sens, car il y a un jeu de mots évident entre le terme araméen à l’état emphatique [אֲגְנָא] ‘agneau’ (qui était prononcé probablement *imra*, puisque les gutturals n’étaient pas prononcées) et le terme hébreu [אֶבְרָה] ‘verbe, parole’ qui était prononcé aussi *imra*, puisque le *cheva* et le *he* final n’étaient pas prononcés... Il y a un double sens dans les paroles prononcées par St. Jean Baptiste ‘Voilà l’agneau de Dieu,’ puisque ces paroles signifient en même temps par amphibologie intentionnelle ‘Voilà le Verbe de Dieu’, et par suite St. Jean Baptiste appelle Jésus le ‘Verbe de Dieu’, en même temps qu’il le nomme ‘Agneau de Dieu.’”

<sup>25</sup> P. J. Du Plessis, “Zie Het Lam Gods Overwegingen Bij De Knechtsgestalte in Het Evangelie Van Johannes,” in *De Knechtsgestalte Van Christus: Studies Door Collega's en Oud-Leerlingen Aangeboden Aan*, ed. H. N. Ridderbos, (Kampen: Kok 1978), 125.

*I Enoch* 90:37 speaks of the seven-horned lamb that is portrayed as being militant and conquering his enemies. Corresponding also to this theme is a similar passage of a conquering lamb in *Test. Joseph* 19:8.<sup>26</sup> Dodd, in his argument, links John the Baptist's image of the lamb to the lamb imagery found in the Apocalypse and the late Second Temple literature. Furthermore, he suggests that John the Evangelist understood "the Lamb of God" to be a synonym of "Messiah." Dodd relies on the Scriptural passage as verification: The Baptist says, "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1:29, 36). Andrew hears him and later on he finds "his brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah'" (John 1:41). In addition, Dodd explains that "to bear sin" does not refer to the death of Christ as an atoning sacrifice. Rather it means to abolish sin: "You know that he appeared to take away sins [ἵνα τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἄρῃ]" (1 John 3:5). The task of the Jewish Messiah was to make an end of sin. Dodd suggested that for the Evangelist "Lamb" was a traditional messianic title, like "Messiah" and that John the Baptist may have used it in its apocalyptic sense.<sup>27</sup> Some scholars object to Dodd's argument regarding the apocalyptic Lamb as being the idea intended by the Evangelist. Rather, it can be better understood as the meaning intended by John the Baptist.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, Boismard correlates John 1:29 with 1 John 3:5 and concludes that the 'Lamb' removes [*ôte*] and does not carry upon himself [*porte*] the sin of the world. He relies on the Scriptures (Ezek 36:26-27; John 8:31-36; 14:6; 1 John 3:5-9) to affirm that the Messianic age is

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<sup>26</sup> Some commentators express opposing views, for example: Keener, *John*, 452, n. 220: "The earliest supposedly non-Christian use of 'Lamb' for the Messiah is a Christian interpolation in *T. Jos.* 19:8 (Fiorenza, *Revelation* 95; cf. Michaels, *John*, 17). Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory*, 154, n. 63: "The notion of a tradition of an 'apocalyptic lamb,' supposed to be a military leader, on the basis of *I En.* 90.38, has lost support because the context in *I Enoch* is a long allegorical history in which all kinds of animals represent different historical figures and people. Nor can *T. Jos.* 19.8 any longer be reliably cited as a pre-Christian Jewish text."

<sup>27</sup> Dodd, *Interpretation*, 236-38.

<sup>28</sup> Skinner, "Another Look," 101-2, states that Dodd's view is unlikely because of the constant emphasis of the Evangelist on the redemption provided in Christ, for example: John 1:12-13; 5:24-27; 8:51-52; 10:9, 15-17. However, he continues "there is a potential place for [the notion of a 'conquering Messiah'] in the historical context of John the Baptist.

characterized by the eschatological holiness of the people of God. This is attributed to the work of the Messianic King on whom the Spirit of God had rested. The people of God will not commit sin because they received the Spirit of Yahweh. He interprets John 1:29-34 in this sense: During the Baptism, Jesus received the Spirit from above. He in turn will baptize with the Spirit received. But the Spirit of God is a power providing men with strength to walk in righteousness according to the divine law. The author affirms that Christ is definitively the One who abolishes the sin of the world.<sup>29</sup>

P. J. Du Plessis, based on an extensive structural analysis of the text, proposed a different interpretation of the title “the Lamb of God.” He suggested that the term [ἀμνός] in the first chapter of John is not used in the perspective of a sacrificial motif. Rather, he related the word to Jesus’s power and glory as he analyzed John 1:29-39 within the context of the whole chapter. He explained that the core of the first chapter is to present Jesus in his full glory [δόξα]. Through a chiasmic structure, he argued that the term Lamb [ἀμνός] (John 1:29) is not a sign of sacrifice but rather a royal title like the Son of Man [υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου] (John 1:51). He identifies the *Lamb* as a *terminus gloriae for the Son of God/Man*. He based this analysis on the progression in the use of different titles for Jesus in the first chapter. In summary Du Plessis concluded that [ἀμνός] is a Christological title of the Son of God. In reference to the phrase “who takes away the sin of the world [ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου]” he restated that this proclamation does not carry any sacrificial connotation. He went on to further explain that [ὁ αἴρων] (v.29) and [ὁ βαπτίζων] (v.33) are ‘qualifying attributes’ of the [ἀμνός]. Therefore the taking away of the sin [ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν] (John 1:29), an action of the “Lamb” is through the baptism with the Spirit

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<sup>29</sup> Marie-Émile Boismard, *Du Baptême à Cana (Jean, 1,19–2,11)* LD 18 (Paris: Cerf, 1956), 48-56, provides an explicit explanation of his analysis of l’ “Agneau” de Dieu “Qui ôte le péché du monde,” et non pas “Qui porte le péché du monde.” He states that “ L’Agneau ôte le péché du monde en ce sens qu’il donne aux hommes le moyen et la force d’accomplir la loi de Dieu, et donc d’éviter le péché.”

[βαπτίζων ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ] (John 1:33).<sup>30</sup> Ridderbos commented on Du Plessis' views as being very illuminating as he explained and rooted John 1:29 within the context of the text. Yet, his objections to such interpretations were based on the fact that the exploration of the word Lamb [ἀμνός] was based on the context without further explanation of the meaning of the word 'as such.' Also the combination of 'lamb' and 'sin' within the sacrificial Jewish tradition is too specific to be ignored.<sup>31</sup>

Many other scholars have suggested the view that the "Lamb of God" refers to the Passover Lamb. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the Evangelist later identifies Christ's sacrifice with the Passover lamb (John 19:36; cf. Exod 12:46). Both Barrett and Brown concluded that the Evangelist intended "the Lamb of God" as the "Paschal lamb," which in their opinion is different from the possible original meaning envisioned by John the Baptist of an Apocalyptic-Eschatological Messiah.<sup>32</sup> However, there are objections against the Lamb of God interpretation as being the Paschal lamb: First, the Passover victim was not an expiatory sacrifice in the early Jewish tradition. On the other hand, as explained in the first chapter, by the first

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<sup>30</sup> Du Plessis, P. J. "The Lamb of God in the Fourth Gospel," in *A South African Perspective on the New Testament: Essays by South African New Testament Scholars Presented to Bruce Metzger During his Visit to South Africa in 1985*, ed. J. H. Petzer and P. J. Hartin (Leiden: Brill 1986), 139-43; 136-7: "A structural analysis of John 1:29-39 taken in the context of the whole of chapter 1 leads us to the focal point of verse 14: καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο...καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός. Accepting Jesus the μονογενῆς of the Father as concomitant with ὁ ἀμνός τοῦ θεοῦ made it a *terminus gloriae*."

<sup>31</sup> Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John: A Theological Commentary*, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), *John*, 72, commented that Du Plessis' analysis is very illuminating but "1) the filling out of the word [ἀμνός] purely on the basis of the context and without clear points of contact in what the word means 'as such' seems a bit forced. 2) From a semantic point of view the combination of 'lamb' and 'sin' is too specific for the exegete to ignore the intrinsic connection between the two concepts."

<sup>32</sup> Brown, *John*, 58-9. Barrett, "Lamb," 210-18: "John the Baptist...thought of the Messiah as the apocalyptic lamb, destined to overthrow evil. But Christian theology pondered the fact of Jesus' death, and Christian liturgy developed the notion of the Christian Passover. John the Evangelist brought the resultant wealth of material together." Skinner, "Another Look," 102, n. 40: states that the idea of a conquering Messiah "can be seen in John the Baptist's Kerygma preserved in Matthew 3:7-12 and Luke 3:11-17, and it helps explain John's questioning of Jesus ('Are you the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?' Matt 11:3; Luke 7:19). Such a question betrays John's expectation of deliverance not only from his incarceration but also from the oppressive regime of Rome, and lends further credence to the notion that he was not expecting a suffering, substitutionary Messiah." McHugh, *John 1-4*, 129.

century AD all sacrifices had an atoning value.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Christian writers when comparing Jesus to the paschal lamb used sacrificial language: “Christ our Passover has been *sacrificed*” (1 Cor 5:7). Second, the Paschal lamb in the Greek Pentateuch was a [πρόβατον] not [ἀμνός], yet, Peter in his first letter describes the “precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb [ἀμνός] without blemish” (1 Pet 1:19; cf. Exod 12:5). The description of Christ as an unblemished Lamb [ἀμνός] evokes the unblemished lamb [πρόβατον] used specifically for Passover. Therefore Brown concluded, “The vocabulary difference is not decisive.”<sup>34</sup>

The image of the Lamb of God has also been viewed figuratively, relying on the OT. Jeremiah states that he “was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter” (Jer 11:19) as well as the suffering servant of Isaiah, who became a sin offering for others. In his submission and meekness “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is dumb” (Isa 53:7 LXX).<sup>35</sup> In the first century AD, the Suffering Servant of Isaiah was not perceived by the Jewish tradition as the figure of the Messiah.<sup>36</sup> But the Christians in the first century AD saw Jesus as their suffering Messiah, submitting to “the slaughter” of the cross. He is taken to his crucifixion, oppressed and afflicted: “as a sheep [πρόβατον] led to the slaughter or a lamb [ἀμνός] before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth” (Acts 8:32-35; cf. Isa 53:7).

*Who takes away the sin of the world* [ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου]: Scholars ponder the Evangelist’s meaning concerning the Baptist’s pronouncement that Jesus is the one

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<sup>33</sup> Morris, *John*, 144-5, n. 49: Similarly C.R. North: “By the close of the OT period, too, all sacrifices were believed to have atoning value (*TWBB*, p. 206).

<sup>34</sup> Brown, *John*, 62. McHugh, *John 1-4*, 127.

<sup>35</sup> Skinner, “Another Look,” 93: “a connection between ‘the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’ and a vulnerable prophet [Jeremiah] facing conspiratorial situation is negligible.” Morris, *John*, 146, the gentle lamb of Jeremiah should probably be dismissed because that lamb was not expected to take away sin.

<sup>36</sup> Brown, *John*, 60, concluded that there is no strong indication before the Christian era supporting that the Messiah was identified with the Suffering Servant. Carson, *John*, 149: “Jesus is the lamb led to the slaughter (Isa 53:7)... (Though it must be admitted that the lamb in the Isaiah passage is no more than simile).”



“who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Some attempt to discern Jesus’ fulfillment of his mission as viewed by both. Furthermore, other commentators including Brown agree that John’s proclamation might refer to both the Passover Lamb and to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah.<sup>37</sup> The reason for this observation is that John’s proclamation of Jesus as the one “who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29) alludes to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah who “bore the sin of many” [מִכֹּתֶר נִשְׁנֶה-נִשְׁנֶה, ἀμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκε] (Isa 53:12; cf. 53:11). Having the image of the Suffering Servant in mind, the Evangelist used the verb αἴρω [to take away or to lift up]. The verb [αἴρω] does not appear in the Suffering Servant passage, but it is used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew verb [נִשְׁנֶה] (e.g., Isa 49:22). Yet the verb [נִשְׁנֶה] is used earlier in the passage: “he shall be exalted and lifted up, [נִשְׁנֶה מִכֹּתֶר יִדְבַּעַ, ὁ παῖς μου ὑψωθήσεται καὶ δοξασθήσεται] and shall be very high” (Isa 52:13). The verb used by the LXX here [ὑψόω] is also used by John in the predictions of Jesus being lifted up: “And as Moses lifted up [ὑψωσεν] the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up [ὑψωθῆναι]” (John 3:14; cf. 8:28; 12:32-34). In other words, the Evangelist understood that when Jesus “the Lamb of God” is lifted up on the cross and exalted, He will lift up [ὑψόω] with him “the sin of the world”.<sup>38</sup> Scholars correlate the use of the singular for “the *sin* of the world” (John 1:29) with the Hebrew text of Isaiah [מִכֹּתֶר נִשְׁנֶה-נִשְׁנֶה, ἀμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκε] (Isa 53:12) where the singular is used as opposed to the Greek version.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory*, 154. Brown, *John*, 63. Keener, *John*, 452-54. Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:298-99.

<sup>38</sup> Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory*, 156-57: “The Greek verb is [ὑψόω], meaning both he will be lifted up literally on the cross and that at the same time exalted to heavenly glory.”

<sup>39</sup> Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory*, 154-6: “The Gospel is here dependent on the Hebrew text of Isaiah, for the Greek has the plural “the sins of many” [ἀμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκε]... Probably John has understood ‘many’ in the Hebrew text in the fullest possible way, taking the reference to be to ‘the sin of the world.’” ; 156, n. 65: “note also (especially in view of the allusion to Isa 42:1 in John 1:34) the universal scope of the Servant’s work according to Isa 42:1, 4.” McHugh, *John 1-4*, 129-32: “the singular [ἀμαρτία] in John 1:29 looks back to Isaiah 53:12 and refers to the Hebrew [נִשְׁנֶה] in the sense just described as an unforgiveable burden...leading ineluctably to death.” Morris, *John*, 148: “John speaks of sin, not sins (cf. 1 John 1:9). He is referring to the totality of the world’s sin, rather than

This was a brief overview of various scholars' interpretations of the Baptist's pronouncement. One should also recall the explanations of the "Lamb of God" image in terms of the daily sacrifice of the Tamid Lamb, as well as the Scapegoat sacrifice, both of which were analyzed in the previous chapter.

### ***Baptizer with the Spirit***

John the Baptist continues his witness of Jesus after proclaiming that he is the "Lamb of God" by stating that he "is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit" (John 1:33). In the OT, "spirit" [πνεῦμα, רוּחַ], also meant wind, breeze, or breath; the same term when used with reference to God had a different meaning. OT commentators all agree that the Spirit of God [רוּחַ יְהוָה] is like the Word of God [דְּבַר יְהוָה] at work: in creation (Ps 33:6; 104:29-30; Gen 1:2-3), in history (Isa 55:10-11), through individuals (Gideon, Judg 6:34; Jephthah, Judg 11:29; Samson, Judg 13:25) and divine providence (Zech 4:6; Isa 30:28; 40:7). As the Psalmist affirms, "Where can I go from your Spirit?" (Ps 139:7). Salvation history is filled with the action of the Spirit of God [רוּחַ יְהוָה] as is evident in the teaching of mankind through the prophets, holy writings and in guiding God's people in the path of righteousness. Prophets foretold a Day to come when the Spirit of Yahweh would change human nature in a profound manner (Joel 2:28-29; cf. Acts 2:17-18; Ezek 36:26-27).<sup>40</sup> The Scriptures often record that the Spirit 'came upon' certain individuals temporarily to empower them so as to accomplish a certain commission (Num 11:25; Judg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:19; 1 Sam 11:6; 16:13; 2 Chron 15:1; 20:14). On the other hand, the expected Messiah, the Chosen One, will be continually filled with the Spirit (Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1; cf. Luke

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a number of individual acts." Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:298: "the sin" of John 1:29 means the whole collective burden of sin which weighs on mankind."

<sup>40</sup> McHugh, *John 1-4*, 136-8.

4:18).<sup>41</sup> In late Second Temple Judaism, many seem to have accepted the fact that God was no longer sending his Spirit to the people of Israel. In the days of Herod, many awaited the Messiah; they waited for the fulfillment of the OT promises.<sup>42</sup>

Beginning with the annunciation of the birth of Jesus, many were filled with the Holy Spirit: Mary, Elizabeth, Zechariah, John, and Simeon (Luke 1:15, 35, 41, 67; 2:25-27). This initial pouring out of the Spirit was in anticipation of the coming of the Messianic time, which will be announced later on by the forerunner John the Baptist.

John the Baptist is depicted as the last prophet of the OT as well as the transitional figure. He was not a follower of Jesus, nor did he become one of his disciples. John testifies to the pre-existence of Jesus (John 1:30; cf. 1:15); earlier he emphasizes Jesus' superiority (John 1:27; cf. 1:15, 30).<sup>43</sup> He himself did not know Jesus in a messianic sense (John 1:31, 33), yet the visible descent of the Spirit [πνεῦμα] in the form of a dove became a God-given sign (John 1:32).<sup>44</sup> Later on Jesus refers to John as the first witness to his identity: "you sent to John and he has borne witness to the truth, etc" (John 5:33-35).<sup>45</sup> John the Baptist witnessed to the Spirit's [πνεῦμα] descending [καταβαῖνον] and remaining [μένον] on Jesus; he will become the baptizer

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<sup>41</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 70.

<sup>42</sup> McHugh, *John 1-4*, 138: "from 150 BC to AD 100, Judaism seems to have accepted as fact that the Lord was no longer sending his Spirit to chosen ones among the people of Israel: see 1Macc. 4:46; 9:27; 14:41 (written around 100 BC)...The conviction that the voice of prophecy was silent led to the proliferation of pseudepigraphical work...These books consistently stress that the spirit will return and soon. The *Testament of Levi* 18:7 and the *Testament of Judah* 24:2-3... composed between 135 and 63 BC...*The Psalms of Solomon*, speaks of a Messianic King filled with the Spirit ... *I Enoch*..."

<sup>43</sup> Ridderbos, *John*, 75, n. 38: "In the prologue [John 1:15] the superiority of Jesus over John is specifically mentioned in connection with the glory of the Word that was with God. But in [John 1:30] we are dealing specifically with Jesus' superiority over John in a salvation-historical sense."

<sup>44</sup> Carson, *John*, 151: "In the synoptic Gospels, the descent of the Spirit as a Dove was something Jesus himself witnessed (Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22)...In the fourth Gospel, however, the dove assumes a different... role: it identifies the Coming One to *John the Baptist*. Morris, *John*, 152.

<sup>45</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 70: "The divine revelation received by John the Baptist [suggestive of an OT prophet] distinguishes him from Jesus' followers...since all other disciples needed human witnesses to become aware of Jesus' messiahship" (cf. Matt 11:11).

with the Holy Spirit (John 1:32-33).<sup>46</sup> As noted earlier, the reason John came baptizing with water was so as to reveal Jesus to Israel as the one who would baptize in the Spirit.<sup>47</sup> For during the messianic age, the renewal of Israel will be through the power of the Spirit: “I will sprinkle clean *water* upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses...A new heart I will give you, and a new *spirit* I will put within you...” (Ezek 36:25-27).

### ***Son [υἱός], the Chosen One [ἐκλεκτός] of God***

John the Baptist has seen with his own eyes, therefore he testifies that Jesus is “the Son of God” (John 1:34). This divine title refers to the heavenly voice heard in the Synoptic accounts of the baptism: “you are my beloved Son [ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός] with you I am well pleased” (Mark 1:11; cf. Luke 3:22; Matt 3:17). This voice relates to Psalm 2:7, “You are my son,”<sup>48</sup> and to Isaiah 42:1, “in whom my soul delights.” Some of the Johannine manuscripts have a textual variant as they read “the Chosen One” instead of “the Son of God.” This variant has led commentators to ponder which of these two titles should be considered the original.<sup>49</sup> The idea is that Christian scribes may have at some point replaced one title with the other. Many scholars

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<sup>46</sup> Scholars comment on John’s account of Jesus’ baptism: Brown, *John*, 65-6: John in his Gospel omits the narrative, the voice, and the opening of the heavens and concentrates on describing the descent of the Spirit. Köstenberger, *John*, 70, n. 49: “The Johannine account of Jesus’ Baptism focuses on ...the Spirit’s role in anointing Jesus and inaugurating His ministry.” Édouard Cothenet, “The Témoignage Selon Saint Jean,” *Esprit et Vie* 28 (1991), 402: “[L’Évangéliste] ne relate pas directement la scène comme les Synoptiques, mais fait intervenir le Baptiste en témoin...Jean est seul à insister sur la permanence de l’Esprit sur Jésus [Jean 1:32]...Jésus nous apparaît comme la demeure, disons le mot, comme le Temple de L’Esprit.” See also Keener, *John*, 460.

<sup>47</sup> Bieringer, “Das Lamm Gottes,” 216-7.

<sup>48</sup> Carson, *John*, 599, mentions that in the OT the anointed king of Israel was sometimes referred to as Son of God (Psalm 2:7; cf. 89:26-27); in some intertestamental sources “Son of God” is parallel to Messiah.

<sup>49</sup> Stephen S. Kim, “The Relationship of John 1:19-51 to the Book of Signs in John 2-12,” *BSac* 165 (2008), 330, n. 33: “Rudolf Bultmann, Gerald L. Borchert, Hermann Ridderbos, and George R. Beasley-Murray favor the reading ‘This is the Son of God,’ while Leon Morris, D. A. Carson, G. Burge, C. K. Barrett, [Raymond] Brown, and Rudolf Schnackenburg favor the reading ‘This is the Chosen One of God.’” François-Marie Braun, *Jean Le Theologien*, vol. 2, *Les Grandes Traditions D’Israël et L’Accord des Écritures Selon le Quatrième Évangile*, EBib (Paris: Gabalda, 1964), 71-3: Braun favors the reading “This is the Son of God.” He concludes his argument: “La leçon ὁ ἐκλεκτός de Jn 1, 34 ne me paraît concluante. Il est possible qu’elle soit primitive; mais l’on ne peut rien affirmer de plus.”

tend to believe that changing “the Chosen One” into “the Son of God” is more likely rather than a change in the opposite direction.<sup>50</sup> The vast majority of the external evidence, however, is in favor of [υἱός]. Concerning the internal evidence, some scholars agree that it is in favor of the use of [ἐκλεκτός] while others maintain that it favors the use of [υἱός].<sup>51</sup>

The “Son of God” [ὁ ἄμνός τοῦ θεοῦ] is a common title in the Fourth Gospel (John 1:34; cf. 1:49; 3:18; 5:25; 10:36; 11:4, 27; 19:7; 20:31). It also harmonizes with the Synoptic accounts of the Baptism. By divine revelation to John the Baptist, Jesus is the ‘Son of God’ (John 1:34; cf. Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; Matt 3:17) and is also ‘the Lamb of God.’ Interestingly, the witness of John the Baptist that Jesus is both Lamb and Son is also expressed among Jesus’ first disciples (1:36, 49) and in Jesus’ passion (19:7, 36).

The proclamation of the Baptist that Jesus is “the Chosen One [ὁ ἐκλεκτός],” if it is the original, echoes Isaiah 42:1: “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, [ὁ ἐκλεκτός, בְּרִיִּי] in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit [πνεῦμά μου, רוּחִי] upon him.” This verse is clearly linked with Isa 11:2: “And the Spirit of the Lord [רוּחַ יְהוָה, πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ] shall rest upon him.” Both mention the Spirit and are associated with Messianic expectations. Therefore,

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<sup>50</sup> Brown, *John*, 57: “It is difficult to imagine that Christian scribes would change ‘the Son of God’ to ‘God’s chosen one’” while a change in the opposite direction would be quite plausible. Harmonization with the Synoptic accounts of the baptism... would explain the introduction of the Son of God into John.” Kim, “Relationship,” 330, n. 49, states that it is not difficult for a scribe to change ‘the Chosen One’ to ‘the Son of God’ since “The expression ‘Son of God’ is a common expression in the Fourth Gospel (cf. 1:49; 3:18; 5:25; 10:36; 11:4, 27; 19:7; 20:31). Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:305-06: “this title [the Chosen One] occurs only here in John and elsewhere only in Luke 23:35 (cf. also Luke 9:35, ὁ ἐκλελεγμένος). It is easy to understand the alteration from this unusual and peculiar title to the ordinary ‘Son of God’”.

<sup>51</sup> Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:305. Moloney, *John*, 59: “Part of the manuscript tradition (P<sup>5</sup>, first hand of Sinaiticus, Old Latin, some Syriac translations) has ‘the chosen one of God.’ The textual tradition for ‘Son of God’ is stronger and the reading ‘the Son’ rather than ‘the Chosen’ is more in harmony with Johannine language and theology.” Carson, *John*, 152. Boismard, *Du Baptême*, 47-8. McHugh, *John 1-4*, 141: “There is, however some support, chiefly Western for [ἐκλεκτός]. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 26: ‘the Elect One of God’ evokes the first Servant Song (Isa 42:1), yet it is not “to be automatically interpreted in the light of the last Servant Song (Isa 52:13-53:12).” This title also refers to the Son of Man in the judgment scenes of the similitudes of Enoch (Enoch 49:2, 4). Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2d ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 172: “On the basis of age and diversity of witnesses a majority of the Committee preferred the reading [υἱός] which is also in harmony with the theological terminology of the fourth Evangelist.”

the Baptist's witness of the descent of the Spirit confirms God's promise of pouring his Spirit on his servant, "the Chosen One" (John 1:32-33; cf. Isa 42:1; Matt 12:18). "The Chosen One" is also noted as a messianic title by the Jewish rulers: "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One! [ὁ Χριστὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἐκλεκτός]" (Luke 23:35). The Baptist does not only see Jesus in the physical sense but also in an enlightened sense illuminated by "the true light" (John 1:9). According to Bauckham, 'The Chosen One' seems to be a more fitting title as John the Baptist's understanding of the identity of Jesus becomes unique and insightful.<sup>52</sup> In addition, McHugh demonstrates the internal evidence in favor of 'God's Chosen One': First, 'the Elect One' was one of the leading titles used in contemporary Palestinian Judaism. Second, it is not a common title of Jesus used in Christian writings (except for 1 Pet 2:4, 6 and in Luke 23:35); therefore it is unique. Third, by accepting the title of Jesus as 'the Chosen One' in John 1:34, the cross reference to Isa 42:1 becomes obvious.<sup>53</sup>

## V. Lamb of God Reprise

The theme of 'the next day' introduces a new pericope (John 1:35-42). In this scene, John is standing with two of his disciples while looking at Jesus as he walked by. John then again proclaims, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" Jesus does not 'call' his first disciples, rather it is through the witness of the Baptist, now reiterated to his followers, that Jesus' gains his first disciples. The two disciples, upon hearing, leave John and start to walk towards Jesus and "they

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<sup>52</sup> Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory*, 158. Cothenet, "Le Témoignage," 402-03: "En proclamant 'j'ai vu', Jean-Baptiste ne s'en tient pas au signe extérieur, mais il engage une interprétation; son regard est un regard de foi qui, derrière les apparences, saisit la signification profonde. Il relie ainsi le Baptême de Jésus à la promesse de la descente de l'Esprit sur le Messie, selon la prophétie d'Isaïe (11:1) et en même temps il dévoile l'avenir en présentant le Messie d'Israël comme 'celui qui baptize dans l'Esprit.'"

<sup>53</sup> McHugh, *John 1-4*, 142.

followed [Him]” (John 1:35-37).<sup>54</sup> They followed “the true light,” to which John came to bear witness (John 1:7). They started walking on their journey of faith in discipleship with their new “Rabbi,” Jesus. In the Gospels, ‘to follow’ [ἀκολουθέω] is associated with discipleship. It means a spiritual following, in which the disciple conforms himself with the master as his model, and also a physical following, where the disciple walks in the same path of his master.<sup>55</sup> By directing all to Christ, John accomplishes his mission. He testifies to the true identity of Jesus (John 1:29-34, 36). Later on he declares, “He [Christ] must increase, but I [John] must decrease” (John 3:30).

## **VI. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has presented an exegesis of the pericope containing the “Lamb of God” image (John 1:29-34, 36) as well as a brief summary of the diverse contributions made by various scholars. The next chapter will address the purpose for which the Evangelist chose the Baptist’s eyewitness account of Jesus’ first public appearance. It will also discuss how this proclamation impacts or shapes the rest of the Gospel.

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<sup>54</sup> De Goedt, “Révélation,” 144: “Jésus ne vient pas à Jean pour lui arracher ses disciples. Il suffit que le Précurseur montre l’Agneau de Dieu, passant, pour que ceux-ci, le quittant, suivent un nouveau, leur nouveau ‘maître’, pour que, quittant l’ami de l’Epoux, ils suivent l’Epoux lui-même.” Cothenet, “Le Témoignage,” 403, “La sincérité du Baptiste se marque par son désintéressement. Lui-même envoie ses disciples vers l’Agneau de Dieu.”

<sup>55</sup> Beasley-Murray, *John*, 26, “they followed” is a first step towards becoming disciples of Jesus. Moloney, *John*, 59. See also Ridderbos, *John*, 81.

## CHAPTER III

### Jesus, “the Paschal Lamb”: Themes and Symbols of Passover and Exodus in John’s Gospel

#### I. Introduction

Years after the beheading of the Baptist by Herod the Tetrarch, the Evangelist wrote his Gospel while in Ephesus. He purposely introduces the Baptist’s testimony about Jesus as lamb at the beginning of his Gospel. As a witness to Jesus’ death and resurrection, the Evangelist believed that Jesus is “the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The rest of the Gospel then interprets this image in terms of the Passover. For example, the Evangelist highlights three Passovers in Jesus’ public life and ultimately portrays Jesus at his crucifixion as the true paschal lamb.

This chapter illustrates the way in which the Evangelist presents the Passover and Exodus themes that are fulfilled in the public ministry of Jesus, whom he portrays as the perfect paschal sacrifice. This will be accomplished first by an overview of the structure of John’s Gospel; then by surveying the pertinent Passover and Exodus themes, theological motifs, and references to the paschal lamb in relevant passages; and lastly, by exploring the manner by which the Evangelist cleverly portrays Jesus’s death to be the ultimate paschal sacrifice. He thus confirms the Baptist’s original salvific message: “Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

#### II. The Structure of John’s Gospel

##### *The Prologue (John 1:1-18)*

As mentioned earlier, the prologue is characterized by high Christological themes. As we examine the Passover and Exodus symbols throughout John’s Gospel some of these themes will



be surveyed.

### *The Book of Signs (John 1:19–12:50)*

Jesus' public ministry is recorded in the "Book of Signs"; the miracle stories in John, unlike the Synoptics, are called "signs" [σημεῖον].<sup>1</sup> In the OT, a sign [תּוֹטָה] confirms that a prophet is being sent by God (Exod 3:12; 4:1-9; 1 Sam 10:1-9) or unveils events to come (Isa 7:10-16).<sup>2</sup> More importantly, Yahweh manifested his glory through supernatural interventions and signs (Num 14:22).<sup>3</sup> In the "Book of Signs," Jesus reveals his identity through the seven signs—miracles [σημεῖον] (John 2:11, 18; 4:54; 5:17; 6:14; 9:16; 12:18).<sup>4</sup> Several of these signs occur in or near a Passover context (2:13, 23; 6:4; 11:55; 12:1). There are also frequent references to the OT in the "Book of Signs," generally presented by the formula "it is written" [γράφω] or something similar (John 1:45; 2:17; 5:46; 6:31, 45; 7:42; 8:17; 10:34; 12:14).

### *The Book of Glory (John 13:1–20:31)*

The "Book of Glory"<sup>5</sup> records Jesus' farewell discourse to his disciples as well as the narrative of his passion, death, and resurrection, which occur at Passover (13:1; 18:28, 39; 19:14). The OT quotations in the "Book of Glory" are introduced as a "fulfillment" [πληρόω] of

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<sup>1</sup> The word [ἔργον] is also used (e.g., 7:21).

<sup>2</sup> Beasley-Murray, *John*, 33: "the σημεῖα of Jesus are revelations of his glory."

<sup>3</sup> Frédéric Manns, *L'Évangile de Jean à la Lumière du Judaïsme*, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Analecta 33 (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1991), 14: "Dans l'Ancien Testament la gloire de Yahve désigne Dieu en tant qu'il se révèle dans sa majesté et dans l'éclat de sa sainteté. Dieu manifestait sa gloire dans des interventions éclatantes et dans des signes (Nb 14, 22), tels le miracle de la Mer Rouge et le don de la manne (Ex 16, 7)."

<sup>4</sup> The sign of the cross/resurrection (John 2:18-22; cf. John 12:33; 18:32) is considered by some to be the seventh sign in place of the walking on the water (John 6:16-21). Jesus' first two signs are in chapters 2–4, called the "Cana cycle" because both are performed in Cana. The other sign-miracles occur in chapters 5–12, frequently called the "Festival Cycle" because of their occurrence within the context of Jewish festivals: the unnamed "feast" (5:1), "Passover" (6:4), "Tabernacles" (7:1–10:21; see 7:2), Dedication or Hanukkah (10:22-42; see 10:22), and another Passover (11:55; 12:1). Stephen S. Kim, "The Christological and Eschatological Significance of Jesus' Passover Signs in John 6," *BSac* 164 (2007), 307-8: the 'Cana cycle' reveals Jesus as the Messiah who grants life and the importance of believing; the 'Festival cycle' develops the theme of opposition to Jesus by the Jewish leaders.

<sup>5</sup> Dodd, *Interpretation*, 289, calls the "Book of Glory," the "Book of the Passion."

Scripture (John 12:38-40; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 18:9, 32; 19:24, 28, 36-37).<sup>6</sup> The section concludes with a statement of purpose (John 20:31).

#### *The Epilogue (John 21:1-25)*

The Epilogue recounts the resurrection appearance in Galilee and ends with a second conclusion.

### **III. Themes of Passover and Exodus**

In contrast to the Synoptics, which record only one Feast of Passover during Jesus' public ministry, the Fourth Evangelist highlights three celebrations. Notably, prior to the onset of his ministry, Jesus is depicted as "the Lamb of God" whose mission is to "take away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Subsequently, the Evangelist connects many of Jesus' activities and discourses with Passover and Exodus themes and symbols and finally depicts Jesus as the true and perfect Paschal sacrifice. Therefore, Jesus' sayings, actions and entire ministry as expressed in John's gospel will be examined within this light.

#### *The Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-12)*

Prior to the first Passover, the sign of changing water to wine at the wedding feast at Cana marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry (John 2:1-11). The narrative of the miracle story begins "on the third day" [τῆ ἡμέρᾳ τῆ τρίτῃ] (John 2:1). Some commentators interpret "the third day" using the theme of "the next day" as a count for the progression of days (John 1:29, 35, 43); others delve into a deeper theological meaning by relating it to OT passages.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Stanley E. Porter, *John, His Gospel and Jesus: In Pursuit of the Johannine Voice* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 200-2. Craig A. Evans, "On the Quotation Formulas in the Fourth Gospel," *BZ* 26 (1982), 79-82 states that "whereas various details in the public ministry of Jesus are viewed in terms of correspondence to certain Old Testament passages (the usual formula being [καθώς ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον], details in the passion are regarded as accomplished in order to fulfill scripture [ἵνα πληρωθῆ]."

<sup>7</sup> Keener, *John*, 496-7. For Dodd, *Interpretation*, 300, the miracle anticipates the manifestation of Christ's glory in the resurrection. Köstenberger, *John*, 91-2, considers the third day to be from the call of Jesus to Philip and Nathanael (1:43-51). For Moloney, *John*, 66, the third day recalls the revelation at Sinai (19:6). McHugh, *John 1-4*,

Interestingly, this same expression is also found twice in Exodus as Moses instructs the people to “be ready by the third day; for on the third day the Lord will come down upon Mount Sinai” (Exod 19:11; cf. 19:15). “On the third day,” the Lord appeared and revealed his glory [כבוד, δόξα] (Exod 19:16; cf. Deut 5:24).<sup>8</sup> In correlation with this event, the words of Jesus’ mother to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you” [ὅ τι ἂν λέγη ὑμῖν ποιήσατε], echo the words of the people of Israel at Mount Sinai as they commit themselves to the Lord: “All that the Lord has spoken we will do” [ὅσα εἶπεν ὁ θεός ποιήσομεν]” (John 2:5; cf. LXX Exod 19:8; 24:3, 7).<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the stone jars used to perform the miracle were for Jewish purification (Lev 11:33). The jars totaling six (an imperfect number), filled with water represent the old order of the Jewish law. Jesus replaces the water with the good wine.<sup>10</sup> In this way, John reinforces the contrast made earlier between the gift of the law given through Moses and the coming of grace and truth [χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας, נְחֻמָּה וְטוֹבָה] through Jesus (John 1:14, 17; cf. Exod 34:6).<sup>11</sup> The gift of the law sealed with the Mosaic covenant made the people of Israel God’s “own possession among all the peoples” (Exod 19:5). Prophets frequently portrayed this covenantal relationship as a

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177, counts 6 days: the third day will fall on Friday thus correlating it with Good Friday. Carson, *John*, 168, states that another day should be added as the disciples of John spend the rest of the day with Jesus, “for it was the tenth hour” (John 1:39). If correct, Jesus will be at the wedding on the Sabbath; Jesus performs other signs on the Sabbath (John 5:16; 7:21-24; 9:16). Boismard, *Du Baptême*, 15, counts seven days, the reason is: “[Jean] veut souligner le parallélisme théologique qui existe entre la première création du monde, en sept jours, effectuée par le Verbe de Dieu (cf. Jo., 1, 1-5) et l’oeuvre du salut messianique considérée comme une création nouvelle dans le Christ (cf. Jo., 1, 3, 17).” Whether the day on which the miracle occurs is the sixth or seventh, some exegetes make the link with the prologue “In the beginning” [Ἐν ἀρχῇ] and consider it to refer to a “new creation” (John 1:1; cf. Genesis 1:1).

<sup>8</sup> Francis J. Moloney, *Belief in the Word: Reading John 1–4* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 55-7, 91-2.

<sup>9</sup> Moloney, *Belief in the Word*, 83: “Whereas the LXX uses *lalein* [λαλέω] on two occasions (Exod 24:3, 7) the Johannine choice of *legein* [λέγω] possibly comes from the title *logos* in the prologue, as well as its use in Exod 19:8.”

<sup>10</sup> Moloney, *John*, 72: the issue that determines the significance of the description is their association with rites of the Jews and the number six. Carson, *John*, 174: “Some see in the number six a reference to incompleteness, one less than seven... that view may well be strained, for the miracle concerns the transformation of water, not the provision of an additional water jar.” Manns, *L’Evangile*, 103: “Jean a l’intention de montrer l’imperfection de la loi Juive. Jésus s’appête à infuser un esprit nouveau dans le Judaïsme.”

<sup>11</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 96-7.

marriage between God and his people (Hos 2:19-20; Isa 25:6-8; 62:5; Jer 2:2; 3:14).<sup>12</sup> Notably, in the Scriptures, the context of a wedding symbolizes also the messianic times (Isa 54:4-8; Rev 19:7-9; 21:2, 9; 22:17). An abundance of wine indicates the joy of the final days (Amos 9:13-14; Hos 14:7; Jer 31:12).<sup>13</sup>

This first sign manifested Jesus' glory<sup>14</sup>—as at Sinai God revealed his glory to Moses and to Israel—and Jesus' "disciples believed in him" (John 2:11; cf. Deut 5:24).<sup>15</sup> This manifestation of glory recalls the words of the Prologue: "the Word became flesh [σὰρξ] and dwelt [σκηνώ, literally to live in a tabernacle or a tent] among us... we have beheld his glory"(John 1:14). In the OT, God was present among his people in the tabernacle and later the temple (Exod 26–27; 1 Kgs 6:13). Through the Incarnation, Jesus is the dwelling of God among his people, the tabernacle [יִשְׁכַּן, σκηνή] where the glory of God is revealed (John 1:14; cf. LXX Exod 40:34).<sup>16</sup>

Jesus on leaving Cana goes down to Capernaum where he stayed for a few days accompanied by his disciples before going up to Jerusalem, for the Passover was at hand.

The Passover was one of the three Feasts when Jewish males would go up to Jerusalem to "appear before the Lord" (Deut 16:16). The temple sacrificial system was a means of atonement, enabling the pilgrims to receive forgiveness of sins as well as purification.<sup>17</sup> At a certain time in Jewish history, the merchants selling animals for sacrificial offerings, set up their stands on the

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<sup>12</sup> Mary L. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 69.

<sup>13</sup> Brown, *John*, 1:104-5. Moloney, *John*, 66: "the setting of a marriage feast also summons up biblical images of the messianic era and the messianic fullness, marked by wine and abundance of fine food" (Hos 2:19-20; Isa 25:6-8; Jer 2:2; Song of Songs).

<sup>14</sup> Carson, *John*, 175: "the servants saw the sign, but not the glory; the disciples by faith perceived Jesus' glory behind the sign."

<sup>15</sup> Manns, *L'Evangile*, 98, underlines the common points made by Serra, *Contributi*, as he compares Exodus 19 to John 2:1-11: "Moïse et Jésus sont appelés (*ekalesen-eklêthê*) [Exod 12:3; cf. John 2:1], puis descendent (*Katebê*) [Exod 12:10 cf. John 2:11]. Le peuple obéit aux ordres (Ex 19,8 et Jn 2,5). Le thème de la purification est mentionné (en Ex 19,10 et Jn 2,6). La gloire de Dieu se manifeste et provoque la foi (Ex 19,9 et Jn 2,11).

<sup>16</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters: The Word, the Christ, the Son of God*, Biblical Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 327-28, 426.

<sup>17</sup> Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 72.

slopes of the Mount of Olives across the Kidron valley.<sup>18</sup> During the time of Jesus, for convenience and as a service to the travelers, the animals for sacrifice were sold on site in the temple area. The moneychangers were also there for the exchange of currency into Tyrian shekel in order to pay the Temple tax.

*The Cleansing of the Temple: Jesus is the New Temple (John 2:13-22)*

The account of the cleansing of the temple in John's Gospel in comparison with the Synoptics is unique in its placement (at the beginning of Jesus' ministry) and in Jesus' logion to the Jews. The *setting* is the temple area, the outer courtyard or the court of the Gentiles [ἱερόν].<sup>19</sup> Jesus' *action* is to drive out of the temple all the merchants as well as the animals, sheep [πρόβατα] and oxen [βόας] and to overturn the tables of moneychangers (John 2:15).<sup>20</sup> As a result, he temporarily disrupts the whole sacrificial process. Jesus' *saying*—"you shall not make my Father's house [τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς] a house of trade"—clarifies his action (John 2:16). Jesus claims an authority over the house of the Lord which he identifies as his "Father's house" (John 2:16; cf. John 1:14, 18).<sup>21</sup> This confrontation results in two *reactions*. First, Jesus' zealous act prompts the disciples to recall the Psalmist's words: "Zeal for your house has consumed [κατέφαγέ] me" (Psalm 69:9). Yet by using the verb in a future tense [καταφάγεται], the Evangelist probably indicates that such an act will lead Jesus to his fate.<sup>22</sup> Second: "the Jews"

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<sup>18</sup> Carson, *John*, 178.

<sup>19</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 105: "Temple area" (ἱερόν, *hieron*) is distinctive from the temple building proper (ναός, *naos*) [the holy place, the sanctuary]." Morris, *John*, 192-3: the selling took place in the court of the Gentiles.

<sup>20</sup> Morris, *John*, 193, n. 59: "The temple money-changers had a monopoly and often charged exorbitant rates. They have been estimated to have made an annual profit of above £stg. 9,000 a year, while the temple tax brought the temple authorities about £stg. 75,000 a year...the Roman Crassus is said to have taken from it a sum equal to about two and half million pounds sterling."

<sup>21</sup> Dodd, *Interpretation*, 300: "it seems possible that there is an allusion to Zech. 14: 21 'In that day there shall be no more a [כְּנַעֲנִי] in the house of the Lord', if [כְּנַעֲנִי] is to be taken in the sense of 'trafficker' rather than 'Canaanite.'" Carson, *John*, 179: "Equally John may be alluding to Malachi 3:1, 3: 'Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple...he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.'"

<sup>22</sup> Moloney, *John*, 77: the disciples are correct because they "align Jesus with figures from the past... Phineas, Elijah, or Mattathias" (cf. Num 25:11; 1 Kgs 19:10, 14; Sir 48:1; 1 Macc 2:24-26).

ask for a sign that legitimates Jesus' actions. Their request seeks confirmation from the prophet and justification for his acts (John 2:18 cf. Deut 18:20-22).<sup>23</sup> Jesus' logion to the Jews provides the sign: "destroy this temple [τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον] and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19).<sup>24</sup> The Evangelist further explains that Jesus was speaking of "the temple of his body" [τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ] while the Jews thought that he meant the actual temple of Jerusalem (John 2:20-21).<sup>25</sup> The sign given by Jesus thereby refers to what is to come: the temple of Jerusalem will be destroyed in AD 70; furthermore Jesus' body which will be destroyed by "the Jews," will be raised up by Jesus. He is the new sanctuary [ναός], the new "house of God" [Bethel] to which the Evangelist refers as "the temple of his body" (cf. John 1:51).<sup>26</sup> As the temple of Jerusalem replaced the tabernacle so "the temple of his body" will replace the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus is the 'Holy Place' where God and man communicate and where the ultimate sacrifice will take place.<sup>27</sup>

In this scene, the Evangelist frames the cleansing of the temple with the celebration of the Jewish Passover, and creates an *Inclusio* (John 2:13; cf. John 2:23). Using this literary device, he highlights important theological points: first, Jesus' public ministry begins at the temple in Jerusalem; Jesus claims to be the new temple (John 2:19-21). The cleansing of the temple disrupts all of its sacrificial offerings including those of the Passover lambs. Jesus chases out the

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<sup>23</sup> Beasley-Murray, *John*, 40. Carson, *John*, 181: they were more concerned about questioning Jesus' authority than the need for pure worship and right approach to God.

<sup>24</sup> Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 114-15: the Synoptics contain the reference to three days (John 2:19; cf. Matt 26:61, 27:40; Mark 14:58, 15:29). By preserving the reference to three days, the false witnesses are unknowingly predicting Jesus' resurrection.

<sup>25</sup> Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 73, n. 35: "Although technically the terms [ναός and ἱερόν] are indistinguishable, in the literature of the LXX and in the fourth Gospel, the terms are used with precise meanings. The whole point of the misunderstanding of "the Jews" in v. 20 lies in the ambiguity of the term ναός, which Jesus uses with one meaning, while "the Jews" understand it differently. For "the Jews" ναός and ἱερόν are interchangeable, while for the evangelist they are not." Brown, *John*, 1:123.

<sup>26</sup> Porter, *John*, 213. Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 341.

<sup>27</sup> Carson, *John*, 182.

sheep [πρόβατον], which notably is the usual term used in the Exod 12 account of the institution of Passover.<sup>28</sup> Second, the religious authorities will destroy the Temple-body of Jesus, a way pointing to his death that will take place at the last Passover of Jesus's public ministry. Lastly, the reference to Jesus' body and to him being eaten up or consumed [κατέφαγέ] links it with the eating of the Lamb during Passover (Exod 12). More so, it connects this event with the following Passover in which Jesus speaks of eating [φαγεῖν] his flesh and drinking his blood. His flesh will be eaten, as was the flesh of the Passover lamb.<sup>29</sup>

*Feeding the Multitude: A Prophet Like Moses (John 6:1-15)*

As Jesus continues in his public ministry, the sign of the feeding of the five thousand and its related discourse marks the second Passover and is filled with many references and allusions to Moses and the Exodus. The Evangelist explicitly notes that this sign occurs when “the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand” (John 6:4). In this scene Jesus, followed by the crowd, goes up the mountain [τό ὄρος].<sup>30</sup> Jesus' *saying* addressed to Philip—“How are we to buy bread so that these people may eat?”—echoes the question asked by Moses to the Lord: “Where am I to get meat to give all this people?” (John 6:5; cf. Num 11:13).<sup>31</sup> In the OT, when the people murmured in the wilderness of Sin because they had nothing to eat, the Lord said to Moses: “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven,” and “the house of Israel called it manna [מַן],

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<sup>28</sup> Porter, *John*, 212, n. 62: “[πρόβατον] is the more usual term for sheep the one used in the Exod 12 account of the institution of Passover; see Exod 12:3, 4, 5, 21 and 32, where cattle are mentioned also.”

<sup>29</sup> Scott W. Hahn, “Temple, Sign, and Sacrament: Towards a New Perspective on the Gospel of John,” *Letter & Spirit* 4 (2008), 112-3.

<sup>30</sup> Moloney, *John*, 195-6: *the mountain*, scholars interpret the use of the definite article by making the link with the gift of the Law at Sinai, while others reject this connection. “The gift made to the people in the law through Moses is about to be perfected in and through the gift of Jesus Christ” (cf. 1:16-17).

<sup>31</sup> Moloney, *John*, 197. Köstenberger, *John*, 201, n. 10: “There are several other parallels between John 6 and Num 11: the grumbling of the people (Num 11:1; John 6:41, 43); the description of the manna (Num 11:7-9; John 6:31); the reference to the eating of meat/[Jesus'] flesh (Num 11:13; John 6:51); and the striking disproportion between the existing need and the resources” (Num 11:22; John 6:7-9).

μων]” (Exod 16:14, 31).<sup>32</sup> Andrew finds a lad who has five barley loaves and two fish. Jesus’ *action* is that “[he] took [ἔλαβεν] the loaves, and when he had given thanks [εὐχαριστήσας], he distributed [διέδωκεν] them ...” and did so with the fish (John 6:11).<sup>33</sup> In the OT, Moses required that the manna should not be stored (Exod 16:19). In contrast, as Jesus’ provision is abundant, he commands his disciples to “Gather [συνήγαγον] up the fragments [κλασμάτων] left, that nothing may be lost” (John 6:12).<sup>34</sup> The multitude’s *reaction* to this “sign” acknowledges that Jesus is “the prophet who is to come into the world” (John 6:14; cf. John 1:21; 7:40; Deut 18:18).<sup>35</sup> He is a miracle worker like Moses, who performed “signs and wonders” (Deut 34:11).<sup>36</sup> In addition, this sign prepares for Jesus’ “bread of life” discourse, which takes place within the context of Passover. As the crowd wanted “to take [Jesus] by force to make him king,” he fled to the hills (John 6:15).

#### *Walking on the Sea (John 6:16-21)*

As God in the OT reveals his authority over nature, so does Jesus as illustrated in the account of his walking on the Sea of Galilee (Exod 14; cf. John 6:17-19).<sup>37</sup> Jesus’ *action* is to come “walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat” (John 6:19). Jesus’ *saying* is a word of reassurance: “It is I [Ἐγώ εἰμι]; be not afraid.” Many commentators agree that this saying carries

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<sup>32</sup> Koester, *Symbolism*, 90.

<sup>33</sup> Moloney, *John*, 198: “the distribution of the loaves recalls the formal setting of a Eucharistic celebration.” The reminder of the green grass and the fact that all are satisfied, fulfills the promise of Psalm 23:1: “the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”

<sup>34</sup> Moloney, *John*, 198: the *Didache* (9:4)...uses the verb [συνάγω] to speak of the gathering of the faithful for Eucharist and [κλασμάτα] is the term used for Eucharistic fragments (*Didache* 9:3, 4).

<sup>35</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 203: Jesus’ multiplication of the loaves evokes the miracle performed by Elisha the follower of Elijah (2 Kings 4:42-44). Francis J. Moloney, *Signs and Shadows: Reading John 5–12* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 37: “The sight of the miracle leads the people to a profession of faith: ‘This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world’ (v. 14).

<sup>36</sup> Kim, “Christological,” 313: Jews in the first century expected the Messiah to renew the miracle of Manna, to do as Moses did. “And it will happen at that time the treasury of manna will come down again from on high, and they will eat of it in those years because these are they who will arrive at the consummation of time” (2 Baruch 29:8). Koester, *Symbolism*, 90-2, indicates that the Messiah was not expected to be a miracle worker. Yet the OT mentions a future time of salvation in which God would perform miracles like the one in Egypt (Mic 7:15; Isa 48:20-21).

<sup>37</sup> Moloney, *Signs and Shadows*, 39.



a divine connotation as Jesus identifies himself as “I am” [ἐγώ εἰμι, אֲנִי הוּא], which is revealed as God’s name in the OT (John 6:20; cf. Exodus 3:14). Others suggest, “It is I” is a means of Jesus’ self-identification.<sup>38</sup>

In conclusion, the combination of the abundance of the supply of food with the walking on the water echoes Moses’ miracles after the first Passover (the sea of Reeds and the manna).<sup>39</sup>

#### *Jesus, the Life-giving Bread from Heaven (John 6:22-71)*

The following day, some of the people who ‘saw signs’ went to Capernaum looking for Jesus (John 6:24, 26). Rather than answering their question, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” Jesus makes a distinction between two kinds of bread: “...do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life [ζωὴν αἰώνιον]” (John 6: 25-27). The crowd questions: “what must we do, to be doing the works of God?” He replies, “Believe [πιστεύω] in him whom he has sent” (John 6:28-29). The people, while recalling the manna “the bread from heaven,” request one more sign to ‘see’ and so to ‘believe’! Jesus clarifies that it was “my Father” not Moses who *gave* the manna and states that God *gives* “the true [ἀληθινός] bread” that “comes down [καταβαίνω] from heaven to give life [ζωή] to the world” (John 6:30-33).<sup>40</sup> The crowd with much confidence asks for “this bread” (John 6:34).<sup>41</sup> Jesus answers: “I am

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<sup>38</sup> Koester, *Symbolism*, 93: “The ‘I Am’ appears in several different forms in John’s Gospel, all of which can have a divine significance.” The expression is prominent in the book of Isaiah quoted in John’s Gospel. n. 41: “John 1:23= Isa 40:3; John 6:45= Isa 54:13; John 12:38= Isa 53:1; John 12:40= Isa 6:9-10.” Morris, *John*, 350, states that the ‘I AM’ as conveyed in John’s Gospel has a divine significance (ex: John 8:58), but here it is a means of self-identification. Dodd, *Interpretation*, 345: “in view of the importance which the formula bears in other Johannine passages it seems more than probable that it is to be understood here as elsewhere as the equivalent of the divine name אֲנִי הוּא, I AM.” Carson, *John*, 275: the expression [ἐγώ εἰμι] in this passage means simply it is I. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 89-90. Moloney, *Signs and Shadows*, 39-40. Kim, “Christological,” 320: “Given the Passover background and the Exodus motif throughout this chapter Jesus was identifying Himself as the very God who revealed Himself to Moses” (cf. Exod. 3:14, LXX). Köstenberger, *Theology*, 359, states that the expression ‘I am’ in (the seven absolute “I am” sayings) Jesus’ deity is implied (John 4:26; 6:20; 8:24, 28; 13:19; 18:5, 6, 8).

<sup>39</sup> Brown, *Introduction*, 345.

<sup>40</sup> Koester, *Symbolism*, 97-8: “this interpretive move changes the plane of the discussion from what Moses did in the past to what God is doing in the present.” Porter, *John*, 214, n. 71: “Westcott (John, 102) notes that “bread from

the bread of life [ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς]; ...” (John 6:35-40). While the crowd earlier connected Jesus with Moses, Jesus identifies himself with the manna stating, “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35). On the literal level, bread sustained life, as did the manna for the Israelites in the desert, whereas on the theological level, Jesus is the I Am, the bread that sustains unto eternal life. This divine gift is for the whole of humanity.<sup>42</sup>

As the Israelites “murmured” against God and his messenger in the wilderness, so did “the Jews” against Jesus’ origin (John 6:41-42; cf. Exod 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Num 11:1).<sup>43</sup> Jesus maintains, “I am the living bread [ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ζῶν] which came down from heaven;” he again compares himself with the manna and claims that he is the new manna that surpasses the old for he provides everlasting life (John 6:48-50).<sup>44</sup> He explains that this true bread [ἄρτος] is his flesh [σάρξ], which he will give “for [ὑπέρ] the life of the world” (John 6:51).<sup>45</sup> Jesus conveys a further challenge, “he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life,” [φαγεῖν (to eat

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God” in 6:33 is similar in phrasing to “lamb of God” in 1:29, 36, namely in indicating that it comes directly from God.”

<sup>41</sup> Frederick F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 151-2: “the people may have meant: ‘In the messianic age the gift of manna will be renewed; give us manna, and we shall know that the messianic age has truly dawned.’”

<sup>42</sup> Hahn, “Temple,” 122-3: the bread of life discourse is composed of six dialogical units between the people and Jesus. In these first four exchanges, mentioned earlier, the crowd’s motivation is to get Jesus to repeat the miracle of the multiplication of the bread. From this point on in the dialogue, Jesus becomes more specific and direct.

<sup>43</sup> Beasley-Murray, *John*, 93. Brown, *Introduction*, 345-6.

<sup>44</sup> Carson, *John*, 294: the comparison between the OT manna and Jesus has been introduced earlier (John 6:30-33). Now one further aspect is developed: the manna in the desert sustained life, yet could not bestow eternal life. By contrast Jesus, the bread that came down from heaven gives eternal life.

<sup>45</sup> Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment*, 176-7. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 93-4: the ‘bread’ is defined as ‘flesh’ rather than the ‘body,’ consistent with “the Word became ‘flesh’” (John 6:51; cf. 1:14). Furthermore, the combination of ‘give,’ ‘flesh,’ and ‘on behalf of’ strongly suggests a sacrificial death on behalf of others. Note also the similar use of [ὑπέρ] (John 10:11, 15; 11:50-51; 11:52; 17:19). Rainer Metzner, *Das Verständnis der Sünde im Johannes-evangelium*, WUNT 122 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 131: John 1:29 provides the main thesis for the understanding of Jesus’ death. Meanwhile, the seven statements that use *for* [ὑπέρ] concerning Jesus, suggest a sacrificial language: the Lamb ‘redeems’ the sin of the world (John 6:51; 10:11, 15; 11:51; 15:13; 17:19; 18:14). Koester, *Symbolism*, 98-99. Brown, *Introduction*, 346: “[John] 6:51b... might well be the Johannine Eucharist formula comparable to: ‘This is my body which is (given) to you’ of Luke 22:18; 1 Cor 11:24.” Bruce, *John*, 158. Ridderbos, *John*, 242. Carson, *John*, 295.

vv. 52-53), τρώγων (to chew / feed on vv. 54, 56-58)] (John 6:53-57).<sup>46</sup> He clarifies that the Spirit not the flesh, is the source of that life (John 6:63). Consequently, it is the Spirit that will feed the believers with the life provided through Jesus' sacrificial death.<sup>47</sup> Upon hearing these words, many disciples "no longer walked with him" (John 6:66). The Twelve remain because they have "believed and have come to know that [Jesus is] the Holy One of God [ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ]" (John 6:69).<sup>48</sup>

The sign of the feeding of the multitude and the discourse that follows highlight important theological points. First, Jesus is the true bread from heaven that surpasses and perfects the former gift of the manna. His revelations constitute the teaching by God (John 6:45; cf. 1:18). Second, Jesus declares that he will give his flesh to eat and his blood to drink for the world (John 6:51, 54). This statement sounds ludicrous, unless it is taken within the context of the earlier image of Jesus as the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29, 36). The Evangelist connects the Passover with the eating of the flesh of Jesus, the paschal sacrifice, whom he will present as such in the passion narrative (John 19:36; cf. Exod 12:46; Num 9:12).<sup>49</sup> The accounts of the multiplication of the loaves and the bread of Life discourse have led many commentators to

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<sup>46</sup> Porter, *John*, 215. Carson, *John*, 296-7. Bruce, *John*, 159. Paul M. Hoskins, "Deliverance from Death by the True Passover Lamb: A Significant Aspect of the Fulfillment of the Passover in the Gospel of John," *JETS* 52 (2009), 297: "Flesh/ meat and blood are two main components of a sacrifice, including the Passover sacrifice (Exod 12:7-8). In 6:51-56, one can readily see a possible relationship between the flesh of Jesus and the Passover, since the Passover Lamb was eaten" (Exod 12:7-8).

<sup>47</sup> Hoskins, "Deliverance from Death," 297.

<sup>48</sup> Carson, *John*, 304: "the adjective 'holy' groups Jesus with his 'Holy Father' (17:11). Jesus is the one whom the Father has 'set apart [lit. "sanctified", same root as "holy"] as his very own' (10:36). Indeed Jesus sanctifies himself (17:19). He could not but be the Holy One if he was to deal effectively with 'the sin of the world.'"

<sup>49</sup> Carson, *John*, 268: "The Jewish Passover celebrated the exodus from Egypt. Intrinsic to the celebration was the slaughter of a lamb... In this gospel, Jesus is the Lamb of God (1:29, 36)...The connections become complex: the sacrifice of the lamb anticipates Jesus' death, the Old Testament manna is superseded by the real bread of life, the exodus typologically sets forth the eternal life that delivers us from sin and destruction, the Passover feast is taken over by the eucharist (both of which point to Jesus and his redemptive cross-work)." Porter, *John*, 215, n. 73: "The movement from the miracle to the discourse, from Moses to Jesus (vv. 32-5, cf. i.17), and, above all, from *bread to flesh*, is almost unintelligible unless the reference in v. 4 to the Passover picks up i:29, 36, anticipates xix.36 (Exod xii.46; Num ix.12) and governs the whole narrative" (quoting from E. Hoskyns and F. N. Davey, *The Fourth Gospel* [2 vols.; London: Faber & Faber, 1940], 1:281).

affirm the Eucharistic language used by the Evangelist. The real presence of Jesus' flesh and blood is in the Eucharist, which he will institute at the last Passover as recounted in the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>50</sup>

As Jesus' public ministry continues, the Evangelist sets the next scene within the celebration of the Feast of Booths.

*Jesus, the Source of the Life-giving Water and the Light of the World (John 7:37-44; 8-9)*

The *setting* is the Feast of Tabernacles/ Booths [סוכות] (John 7:2; Lev 23:33-43). The Israelites recall the protection and presence of God in the pillar of fire/ cloud as their ancestors wandered in the wilderness for forty years dwelling in tents. In the time of Jesus, the people celebrated God's presence in the temple, and looked forward to his future presence in the eschatological temple (Ezek 47:1; Zech 14:7).<sup>51</sup>

Jesus' *action* is that he goes to the temple on the last day of the Feast, "the great day," and claims to be the life giving water (John 7:37-38).<sup>52</sup> Again Jesus states, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12).<sup>53</sup> He warns the Pharisees that as a result of their unbelief, they belong to this world and will die in their sin [ἁμαρτία] (John 8:21-24).<sup>54</sup> Jesus reveals that when 'you' lift up

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<sup>50</sup> Moloney, *Signs and Shadows*, 58-9, states that the Evangelist in his narrative is working at two levels: first, the main purpose of the discourse is to point to Jesus as "the revelation of God, the true bread from heaven, perfecting God's former gift, the bread of the manna." Second, the use of the words: "bread," "food," "flesh," "blood," "to eat," "to drink," "will give," "for your sakes," in the final part of the discourse recalls a Eucharistic celebration. Hahn, "Temple," 124-5: Jesus gradually leads the people to realize that the earthly miracle is a sign that points to a heavenly reality. "The sign points to himself as the 'Christ' and... to his true and divine presence in the Eucharist... The sign ...anticipates in its very language (John 6:11, 23), the last Passover that Jesus will celebrate with his disciples."

<sup>51</sup> Moloney, *John*, 233-6, provides a detailed description of the three major elements that formed the ritual of the celebration of Tabernacles.

<sup>52</sup> Hoskins, "Deliverance from Death," 297: The Spirit is referred to as living water that the believers will receive after Jesus' glorification. Koester, *Symbolism*, 182.

<sup>53</sup> 'To follow' refers to discipleship.

<sup>54</sup> Brown, *John*, 1:350: "'sin' is in the singular in vs. 21 for in Johannine thought there is only one radical sin of which man's many sins (plural in vs. 24) are but reflection. This radical sin is to refuse to believe in Jesus." Koester, *Symbolism*, 197. Rainer Metzner, *Das Verständnis*, 129-30: sin, although in the singular means the whole dimension of the sin, which crushed the world (John 8:21; 8:34; 9:41; 15:22-24; 16:8-9; 19:11). It is not about individual

the Son of man, “you will know that I am he [ἐγώ εἰμι]” (John 8:28).<sup>55</sup> Earlier in the Gospel, Jesus connects his “lifting up” [ὑψόω] with the serpent that was “lifted up” by Moses in the desert providing life to the Israelites.<sup>56</sup> In comparison, Jesus, when lifted up onto a cross, will provide eternal life to those who believe (John 3:14-15; cf. Num 21:9).<sup>57</sup>

As some Jews started to believe, he addresses them, saying “if you continue in my words, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:31-32).<sup>58</sup> This challenging statement initiates a dialogue between the Jews and Jesus: the *theme* addresses slavery vs. freedom; a topic that relates to the original Passover.<sup>59</sup> The Jews maintain that they are the descendants of Abraham, hence are free from any bondage; Jesus describes their sinful behavior as a status of slavery (John 8:33).<sup>60</sup> He further provides the example of the son and the slave clarifying that only the Son can set the slave free (John 8:34-36).<sup>61</sup> Jesus claims to be the God who delivers from slavery to sin and also the means of

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offenses, rather the totality of sin whose power is broken once and forever on the cross (cf. Heb 9). This is made possible through the atoning death of Jesus. In John 1:29, Christ’s title emphasizes the efficacy of his death. Christ by his life and through his unique offering of self brings salvation to the world.

<sup>55</sup> Brown, *John*, 1:350-51. Hoskins, “Deliverance from Death,” 290, n. 33: “For ‘you will know that I am,’ see Exod 6:7; 10:2; 16:12, 29, 46 (Israel); 7:5, 17; 8:22; 14:4 (Egyptians or Pharaoh).” The author states that these words echo those spoken by God in Exodus: he reveals himself through mighty deeds, to both the Egyptians and the Israelites. Bruce, *John*, 193.

<sup>56</sup> Nielsen, “The Lamb of God,” 244: “The bronze serpent functions as an apotropaicum, although...it is obedience to God’s command and not just the sight of the serpent itself, that provides the salvation.”

<sup>57</sup> Koester, *Symbolism*, 29-30: the lifting up [ὑψόω] means not only that Jesus is being “lifted up” onto the cross to die, but also his exaltation in glory (John 3:13; 8:28; 12:32). Köstenberger, *Theology*, 530.

<sup>58</sup> Bruce, *John*, 196: discipleship is something continuous; it is a way of life.

<sup>59</sup> Porter, *John*, 216. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment*, 177: “John 8:31-47 contains some important Passover elements. These...include freedom, slavery to sin, and the devil (elsewhere ‘the ruler of this world’).”

<sup>60</sup> Paul M. Hoskins, “Freedom from Slavery to Sin and the Devil: John 8:31-47 and the Passover Theme of the Gospel of John,” *TJ* 31 (2010): 51, n. 20: “Who practices sin” as a translation for ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν emphasizes that in this context the present tense (imperfective aspect) participle (ποιῶν) has to do with a way of life characterised by sinful behavior rather than commission of an act of sin.” Beasley-Murray, *John*, 134: “There is a slavery from which Abraham’s descendants are not exempt...bondage to sin is a reality for every one who sins...with its roots in a wrong relation to God. Such slavery needs a redeemer!”

<sup>61</sup> Moloney, *Signs and Shadows*, 105-6: there is a shift in the meaning of [ὁ υἱὸς] which is used in v. 35 and repeated in v. 36. Jesus speaks of the son in a general sense (v. 35). Then he speaks of the person who becomes a child of God by believing and accepting Jesus (see 1:12). “It is Jesus, the Son of God who sets people free.” Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment*, 177: “John 8:34 is consistent with 1:29 in its mention of dealing with people’s sin problem.”

deliverance (John 8:28, 36).<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, he distinguishes between Abraham's descendants [σπέρμα] and Abraham's children [τέκνα] by emphasizing that the latter act like their father Abraham.<sup>63</sup> The Jews intend to kill him; in their disbelief in the one "sent" by God, they belong to another father, namely the devil (John 8:39-47). In connection with Passover, Egypt is often called in the OT, the "house of slaves" in which the Israelites were the "slaves of Pharaoh." God redeemed his people from the house of slavery (Deut 13:5; cf. Mic 6:4).<sup>64</sup> As God "sent" Moses, he also "sent" Jesus whose mission is to free the believers from the bondage or slavery to sin.<sup>65</sup> The Passover lamb played an essential role in the freedom of the Israelites from slavery. The blood of the lamb applied on the doorposts prevented the death of Israel's firstborn sons from the plague inflicted by God (Exod 12:12-13:23).<sup>66</sup> Similarly, the Baptist depicts Jesus as the "Lamb of God," who will deliver the believers from the slavery to sin by "taking away" that which leads to death as a result of God's judgment.<sup>67</sup> The narrative of the passion in the fourth Gospel will portray Jesus as the true Passover lamb as the Evangelist makes an intertextual correlation with the Passover ritual.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Hoskins, "Freedom from Slavery," 52.

<sup>63</sup> Beasley-Murray, *John*, 134-5: Abraham's "life was marked by faith in and obedience to God's words" (cf. Gen 12:1-4; 22:15-18). Morris, *John*, 460-1.

<sup>64</sup> Hoskins, "Freedom from Slavery," 55, n. 46: "Egypt is referred to as 'the house of slaves' in "Exod 13:3, 14; 20:2; Deut 5:6; 6:12; 7:8; 8:14; 13:6; Josh 24:17; Judg 6:8; Jer 34:13; Mic 6:4." n. 47: "Exodus 5:15 and Deut 6:21 [the Israelites were] (slaves of Pharaoh); Deut 7:8 and 2 Kgs 17:7 [under the] (hand of Pharaoh); 1 Sam 2:27 [in bondage] (to Pharaoh's house)."

<sup>65</sup> Hoskins, "Deliverance from Death," 291, n. 34: "[References to the sending of Moses occur in] Exod 3:10, 13-15, 7:16. References to the sending of Jesus occur in 8:16, 18, 26, and 29 as well."

<sup>66</sup> Hoskins, "Deliverance from Death," 288, 293, In the OT deliverance from the plague is associated with making atonement, for example: Exod 30:11-16; Num 16:41-50; 25:7-13. The psalmist reiterates that the plague causing the death of Egypt's firstborn, displayed the wrath of God's great acts of judgment (Ps 78:49-51; cf. Exod 6:6; 7:4).

<sup>67</sup> Hoskins, "Deliverance from Death," 292-3: "death due to sin really means death due to God's judgment on sin. Death means experience of his wrath/ punishment for sin."

<sup>68</sup> Nielsen, "The Lamb of God," 252-4.

As their opposition to Jesus increased, the Jews took stones to throw at him but he went out of the temple (John 8:59).<sup>69</sup> As he was passing by, he saw a man born blind. Jesus reemphasizes to his disciples, “I am the *light* of the world [φῶς εἰμι τοῦ κόσμου.]” (John 9:5). Jesus’ *action* is that he takes clay and places it on the eyes of the blind man and commands him to “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam [Σιλωάμ, ἡλψ, which means sent] (John 9:7).<sup>70</sup> The man regains his sight. Thus Jesus reveals that he is the *light* of the world, the one whom God had ‘sent’ (John 9:4).<sup>71</sup> This sign caused two *reactions*: first, the healed man points out that since the world began it has not been heard “that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind” (9:32).<sup>72</sup> He moves from physical blindness to sight, from spiritual blindness to faith. This physical miracle generated the journey of belief in Jesus: first, “the man called Jesus” (9:11); then “he is a prophet” (9:17); then “he is from God” (9:33); finally, the man declared, “‘Lord, I believe’; and he worshiped him” (John 9:11, 17, 33, 38).<sup>73</sup> Second, the Pharisees grow in hostility towards Jesus: first, there is a schism among them regarding Jesus (9:16); then “this man [Jesus] is a sinner” (9:24)<sup>74</sup>; finally “they do not know where he is from” (9:29). The Pharisees physically see but their spiritual blindness increases; they remain in their sin (John 9:39-41). As religious leaders they were more concerned about the observance of the Law; they condemned the healing

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<sup>69</sup> Nielsen, “The Lamb of God,” 251: “Jesus is presented in accordance with Isa 53 as being from God (8:42), truthful (8:45), sinless (8:46) and honoring the Father (8:49), but he is thought to be mentally ill (8:48, 52), is dishonored (8:49) and finally attacked by the Jews (8:59).”

<sup>70</sup> Koester, *Symbolism*, 100-1: the Jewish authorities pointed out that the healing took place on a Sabbath. Furthermore “Kneading was one of the thirty-nine forms of work forbidden on the Sabbath.”

<sup>71</sup> Ridderbos, *John*, 336: the Evangelist establishes an allegorical connection between the water of the spring and Jesus the one sent by the Father. This sign reveals “‘Jesus’ coming as the *Light* of the world, it also symbolizes the sending of the Son of God himself, proceeding as it did from the ever-flowing spring of God’s love to the world.”

<sup>72</sup> Koester, *Symbolism*, 103, clarifies that from a biblical perspective this is true; yet the Scriptures did mention, “that the servant of God—many took to be the Messiah—would be ‘a light to the nations’ and ‘opens the eyes that are blind’” (Isa 42:6-7).

<sup>73</sup> “He worshiped him” in v. 38 is the only pre-crucifixion reference to the worship of Jesus in this Gospel.

<sup>74</sup> Barrett, *John*, 362-3: the Pharisees speak with the authority of Judaism. From the two given facts (the man’s recovered sight, and the conviction of Jesus’ sinfulness by the Law), the only possible conclusion was “that the Law itself was now superseded—a conclusion Paul had long before drawn. The Law in condemning Jesus had condemned itself (Gal 3:10-14); this theme forms the theological basis of the present chapter.”

and the making of the clay, both of which took place on the Sabbath. As a result they cast out the healed man from their presence.

*Jesus, the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-42)*

In the discourse that follows, Jesus addresses the Pharisees with a parable about entering the sheepfold. Despite their lack of understanding, Jesus declares in a solemn manner, “Truly, truly, [Ἀμὴν, ἀμὴν] I say to you I am the door of the sheep” (John 10:7). Using the sheep/shepherd metaphor, Jesus portrays the false shepherds, as “thieves and robbers” who come “to steal [κλέπτω] and kill [θύω] and destroy [ἀπόλλυμι]” for they do not enter by the door (John 10:1, 8, 10).<sup>75</sup>

Some of the leaders of Israel are described as false shepherds in Jesus’ time as well as in the OT (cf. Jer 23:1-8; Ezek 22:27; 34; Zeph 3:3; Zech 10:2-3; 11:4-17). God himself takes the role of the true shepherd (Jer 31:10; 13:17; 23:3; Isa 40:11; 49:9-10). The prophets spoke of a future Davidic figure that would shepherd the people of God (cf. Mic 5:3; Jer 3:15; 23:4-6; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24; Zech 13:7-9).<sup>76</sup> Jesus declares, “‘I Am’ the Good Shepherd [ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς]”; he further defines ‘good’ in the readiness of the shepherd as he “lays down his life *for* [ὕπερ] the sheep” (John 10:11).<sup>77</sup> Jesus surpasses the Jewish expectation of the messianic shepherd as he claims his oneness with God whom he calls Father. His self-gift unto death for the sake of the sheep extends to both Gentiles and Jews (John 10:16). Jesus compares his mutual

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<sup>75</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 304: “three negative verbs are stacked to underscore the devastating effect of these usurpers on God’s people.” Beasley-Murray, *John*, 168-9. Brown, *John*, 1:386.

<sup>76</sup> Moloney, *John*, 301. Barrett, 373, God is described as a shepherd of his people (Ps 23:1; 80:2). David (or the Davidic Messiah) is spoken of as a shepherd (Ps 78:70-2; Ezek 37:24).

<sup>77</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 305: “Several OT passages hint at the Messiah’s self-sacrifice (see esp. Isa 53:12)...Zechariah refers to a figure who is “pierced” and for whom people mourn, a shepherd who is put to death and whose death brings about a turning point (Zech 12:10; 13:7-9).” Brown, *John*, 1:399. Carson, *John*, 386-7: “The preposition [ὕπερ], itself ambiguous, in John always occurs in a sacrificial context, whether referring to the death of Jesus (6:51; 10:11, 15; 11:50ff.; 17:19; 18:14), of Peter (13:37-38), or of a man prepared to die for his friend (15:13)...Jesus’ death is presented here as a sacrifice peculiarly directed to the redemption *of his sheep* whether of this (Jewish) sheep pen or of the others (v. 16).”



knowledge of his ‘own,’ as shepherd with his sheep, to his intimate relationship with his Father (John 10:14-15).<sup>78</sup> The theme of the Shepherd’s death is further accentuated without the pastoral imagery: the Father willed that the Son lay down his life for the world and the Son obeyed in freedom (John 10:17-18).<sup>79</sup> In anticipation of his sacrificial death on the cross at Passover, Jesus reveals himself as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life *for* the sheep.

The Evangelist describes Jesus’ next encounter with the Jews within the *setting* of the Feast of Dedication [ἐγκαίνια η̄γκη].<sup>80</sup> During the festival, “Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered round him” (John 10:23-24).

The *theme* relates to the identity of Jesus, a theme that is a frequent concern of the Jews: “if you are the Christ tell us” (John 10:24). Using the shepherd/sheep metaphor, Jesus maintains that because of their unbelief they will not accept his words; they are unable to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. He further identifies the true believers as the sheep that hear [ἀκούω] the voice and follow [ἀκολουθέω] the Shepherd; he gives them eternal life [ζωὴν αἰώνιον] therefore, they will never perish (John 10:27-28).<sup>81</sup> Jesus reaffirms that he is the real and living presence of God (John 10:30). As the Jews tried to stone him for blasphemy, Jesus maintained that it is he

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<sup>78</sup> Bruce, *John*, 227: the mark of a true shepherd is to know his sheep. The verb ‘know’ occurs four times in verses 14 and 15. “There may be an echo here of the LXX wording of Num. 16:5, ‘the Lord knows those who are his’” (cf. 2 Tim 2:19).

<sup>79</sup> Beasley-Murray, *John*, 171-2: in vv. 17-18 two points are made: “(i) The Father’s love for the Son is linked with the Son’s death for the world... (ii) Jesus lays down his life in order to take it again.”

<sup>80</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 309. Carson, 391: the Feast celebrates the consecration of the temple altar that replaced in 164 BC, ‘the desolating sacrilege’ of Antiochus IV (1 Macc 1:59; cf. Dan 11:31). The celebrants compared it with the Feast of Tabernacles because of the use of lights and the joy of the occasion (cf. John 7:2); “indeed it was called ‘a Feast of Tabernacles in the month of Kislev’ (2 Macc 1:9). Unlike Tabernacles, however, it could be celebrated at home.” Josephus, *Ant.* 12.323-25.

<sup>81</sup> Moloney, *John*, 315: “A believer “hears” (1:41; 3:8, 29; 4:42; 5:24, 28; 6:45; 8:38, 43; 10:3, 16), has “eternal life” (3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68), “follows” Jesus (1:37, 44; 8:12; 10:4, 5), and “is not lost” (3:16; 6:12, 27, 39; 10:10).”

“whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world” (John 10:36).<sup>82</sup> Many believed in him saying, “everything that John said about this man [Jesus] is true” (John 10:41).<sup>83</sup>

The shepherd /sheep metaphor echoes the calling of the first disciples of Jesus. Earlier in the Gospel, the Baptist proclaims to his followers that Jesus is the “Lamb of God” (John 1:36). The two disciples of John hear [ἀκούω] his proclamation and follow [ἀκολουθέω] Jesus who leads them (John 1:37-38). In these successive scenes, Jesus is the “Lamb of God” and is also portrayed as a shepherd (John 1:36; cf. John 1:37-38; 10:11). Later on Jesus finds Philip and asks him to “Follow me,” and he accepts the invitation (John 1:43). The disciples ‘listen’ and ‘follow’ Jesus who goes before them; he ‘knows’ the sheep by name and they ‘follow’ him (John 1:37-38, 40-43; cf. 10:3-4, 27).<sup>84</sup> Jesus, the ‘Lamb of God’ is ‘the Good Shepherd’ who ‘takes away the sin of the world’ by ‘[laying] down his life for his sheep’ at Passover (John 1:29, 36; cf. 10:11).

The foregoing analysis of some of the Passover and Exodus themes can now be summarized. At the first Passover, the Evangelist shows that Jesus will be the new Temple where the ultimate sacrifice will take place, replacing the animal sacrifices in the Temple, including the sacrifice of the Passover lamb. At the second Passover, Jesus identifies himself as the new manna that surpasses the old. His flesh will be eaten, as was the flesh of the paschal lamb. The reference to his blood anticipates his sacrifice and recalls how the blood of the lamb was poured

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<sup>82</sup> Moloney, *John*, 317, indicates that this is the first time Jesus is described as ‘consecrated’ by God. The Feast of Dedication celebrates the consecration of the temple altar. “There is no longer the need to seek God in the consecrated stone altar; God is made known in the person of the consecrated and sent Son of God” (John 10:36). Brown, *John*, 1:411-12. Moloney, *Signs and Shadows*, 147-8.

<sup>83</sup> Carson, *John*, 400-1, clarifies that some things John said about Jesus have not yet been fulfilled: Jesus did not yet take away the sin of the world (1:29) nor did Jesus baptize the people with the Holy Spirit (1:33; cf. 7:39). The witness by John that he is not worthy to untie Jesus’s thongs of his sandals is confirmed in Jesus’ ministry. Many believed in him. “Their faith was an unwitting attestation of the fruitfulness of the Baptist’s witness” (1:7).

<sup>84</sup> Bieringer, “Das Lamm Gottes,” 226-7, states that the central theme ‘to follow’ found in John 1:37, 38, 40, 43 echoes his pastoral motif: “the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out... he goes before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice” (John 10:3-4).

out. In the Feast of Tabernacles, the Evangelist reveals Jesus as the ‘I Am’ who is at work to bring freedom to his people, surpassing the deliverance offered by the sacrifice of the paschal lamb. The Evangelist thus provides the setting for what follows during the third and final Passover in which he portrays Jesus as the true and perfect paschal sacrifice.

#### **IV. Jesus the “Lamb of God,” the True Paschal Sacrifice**

The portrayal of Jesus as the perfect paschal sacrifice in John’s Gospel marks the culmination of the Passover and Exodus themes, which unfold throughout the Gospel. The Evangelist interweaves the last Passover celebration of Jesus’ ministry with the account of his passion.<sup>85</sup>

The theme of Jesus’ death is introduced near the end of the “Book of Signs.” Notably, the timing of the gathering of the Sanhedrin [the chief priests and the Pharisees (v. 47)] relates to “the Passover of the Jews” which “was at hand” (John 11:55). During this council, Caiaphas, the high priest prophesies: “it is expedient for you that one man should die *for* [on behalf of, ὑπέρ] the people, and that the whole nation should not perish” (John 11:50).<sup>86</sup> As a result Jesus is sentenced to his death in substitution for the Jewish nation: unless he dies, the Jewish nation and its leaders will perish at the hands of the Romans. Caiaphas’ pronouncement, although purely

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<sup>85</sup> The Synoptic Gospels indicate that Jesus and his disciples celebrated the Passover together (Mark 14:12; Luke 22:15). Some scholars state that John’s Gospel does not indicate that the last supper was a Passover meal. See Carson, *John*, 455-458, for different exegetes’ interpretations of John’s chronology of the passion narrative in comparison with the chronology of the Synoptic Gospels.

<sup>86</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 352-3: “In the OT, prophecy occasionally was associated with the high priest (Num 27:21). Zadok the priest is called a “seer” (2 Sam 15:27 MT)...Apparently, in the relative vacuum of prophetic voices in the Second Temple period, the priestly class claimed the gift of prophecy for itself.” Barrett, *John*, 407.

political, is in accord with God's will for Jesus.<sup>87</sup> Meanwhile, the Evangelist conveys a deeper implication: Jesus' sacrificial death will also unify all the scattered children of God, fulfilling Jesus' prediction: "there shall be one flock, one shepherd" (John 11:51-52; cf. 12:32; 10:16).<sup>88</sup>

According to God's plan, the sacrifice of the first Passover lamb prevented the death of the firstborn. In a similar manner the sacrificial death of Jesus "the Lamb of God," as portrayed by the Baptist, prevents the death that would result from "the sin of the world" (John 1:29; cf. John 3:14-16; 6:51). Notably, following Caiaphas' pronouncement, Mary anoints Jesus at Bethany "six days before the Passover" (John 12:1). While the two references to Passover are time markers, Jesus' own words concerning Mary's action "let her alone, let her keep it for the day of my burial" portrays him as the paschal victim prepared for sacrifice (John 11:55; 12:1; 12:7).<sup>89</sup>

Prior to beginning the "Book of Glory," the Evangelist purposely quotes Isaiah 53:1 in relationship to Jesus' teaching and deeds (cf. John 12:38). Thus he brings the reader to ponder the suffering servant of Isaiah (Isa 52:13-53:12). Elsewhere, Christian writers used portions of the accounts and applied them to the sufferings of Jesus (Isa 53:4, 5, 7, 12; cf. Matt 8:17; Acts 8:32; Heb 9:28). Interestingly, Jesus is compared in his meekness to "a lamb that is led to the

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<sup>87</sup> Carson, *John*, 422: "while Caiaphas is thinking at the purely political level, John invites his readers to think in terms of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29, 36). Porter, *John*, 217, n. 79: As Köstenberger points out, "In Jesus' case, however, this [Caiaphas' ruling] coincided perfectly with God's plan that Jesus would serve as 'God's lamb' (1:29, 36), a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of humankind (cf. 3:14-16; 6:51; 10:14-18; 12:24, 32)" (*John*, 352). Morris, *John*, 568.

<sup>88</sup> Köstenberger, *Theology*, 417: "[Caiaphas'] prophecy presents Jesus as the vicarious sacrifice for the nation of Israel, and, by Johannine extension also, for the 'scattered children of God' (i.e., the Gentiles; cf. 12:20-33)." Carson, *John*, 422-3, mentions that the real children of God are those who receive the incarnate Word and believe (1:12-13). The 'oneness' motif will reappear in chs. 14-17, it has been introduced in ch. 10. "There we learn that Jesus must draw his sheep from many sheep pens into one flock, under one shepherd" (10:16). Ridderbos, *John*, 410-11. Heil, *Blood and Water*, 31: "by his death Jesus will draw all to himself (12:32) and unify all who believe in him" (10:16; 11:52; 17:20-21).

<sup>89</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 359. Carson, *John*, 427. Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:366.

slaughter [זבח slaughter for food to be eaten].”<sup>90</sup> His flesh will be eaten, as was the flesh of the paschal lamb.

The opening verse in the “Book of Glory” establishes the time of the events yet to come: “before the feast of the Passover” (John 13:1). During the supper, Jesus identifies himself as being the true vine (John 15:1-10).<sup>91</sup> In his high-priestly prayer Jesus sanctifies himself for his disciples: “And *for* their sake [ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν] I consecrate [ἀγιάζω] myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth” (John 17:19). Jesus consecrates himself as a sacrifice *for* his disciples.<sup>92</sup> In the OT, the sacrifice of the paschal lamb was associated with the consecration [ἀγιάζω] to the Lord of the firstborn of Israel, both man and beast (Exod 13:2). Thereafter the firstborn male animals are to be ‘consecrated’ or ‘set apart’ to the Lord as a sacrifice. The firstborn of the Israelites are to be redeemed through animal sacrifice in memory of the Exodus (Exod 13:11-16; Deut 15:19-20). As Jesus sanctifies himself he reveals that one of the motives for his sacrificial death is to consecrate his disciples, as the paschal lamb consecrated the firstborn of Israel to the Lord.<sup>93</sup>

Jesus was arrested that same night and was led to the high priest to be questioned. Early in the morning, he appeared in the praetorium before Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. The Evangelist emphasizes that the Jewish leaders did not enter the praetorium so that they “might

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<sup>90</sup> Sandy, “John the Baptist,” 450: Isaiah is not referring to a sacrificial slaughter [זבח], instead he uses [טבח], which is a slaughter for food.

<sup>91</sup> Porter, *John*, 219. Köstenberger, *Theology*, 502-3. Barrett, *John*, 472-3, In the OT, Israel is called a vine; but the true vine is Jesus; the true disciples, i.e. those who believed in his name and followed him, as branches are incorporated onto the vine.

<sup>92</sup> Brown, *John*, 2:766-77, explains that the phrase “for them [ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν]” may suggest death. He then provides examples of the use of ‘for [ὑπὲρ]’ in John’s Gospel: In 11:51 Jesus is to die *for* the nations; in 10:11 the good shepherd lays down his life *for* his sheep; in 15:13 Jesus speaks of laying down one’s life *for* his friends. Carson, *John*, 567: this language is reminiscent of “OT passages where the sacrificial animal was ‘consecrated’ or ‘set apart’ for death—indeed, of language where consecration becomes synonymous with the sacrificial death itself” (Deut 15:19, 21). Beasley-Murray, *John*, 300-1.

<sup>93</sup> Hoskins, “Deliverance from Death,” 293-4.

not be defiled, but might eat the passover” (John 18:28). The passion narrative that follows connects the events surrounding the death of Jesus to “the day of Preparation of the Passover [παρασκευὴ τοῦ πάσχα]” (John 19:14; cf. John 19:31, 42).<sup>94</sup> That day, as the paschal lambs were slaughtered at the sixth hour, Pilate sentenced Jesus to his death (John 19:14-16).<sup>95</sup> While making the decision to condemn Jesus on behalf of the Jews, Pilate proclaims Jesus’ true identity as “king of Israel” (John 19:14, 15, 19; cf. John 1:49). His pronouncement “Here [Behold, Ἴδε] is your King!” recalls the Baptist’s pronouncement “Behold [Ἴδε], the Lamb of God” (John 19:14; cf. John 1:29, 36). In return, the Jews “cried out, ‘Away with him [ἄρον], away with him [ἄρον], crucify [σταύρωσον] him” (John 19:15). Consequently, they reject “the Lamb of God who takes away [αἴρων] the sin of the world,” demanding from Pilate to take away [ἄρον] Jesus to be crucified (John 1:29; cf. John: 19:15). Ironically, while the Passover commemorates the freedom of the Jewish people from oppression and slavery to Pharaoh, the Jewish leaders and those who follow them reject their deliverance and proclaim their adherence to their Roman oppressors: “We have no king but Caesar” (John 19:15). Furthermore, as the paschal lambs are slaughtered, Pilate hands over Jesus the Lamb of God to be crucified, thereby also fulfilling Jesus’ own prediction (John 19:16; cf. John 8:28).<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Porter, *John*, 220-1: “[John] 19:31 and 42 say that it is the day of preparation—either for Passover or for Sabbath, since the two seem to have fallen on the same day, so far as the author’s account is concerned.”

<sup>95</sup> Beasley-Murray, *John*, 341, states that at the sixth hour (noon) of the day of Preparation, three things take place: “Jews cease their work, leaven is gathered out of the houses and burned, and the slaughtering of the Passover lambs commences.” Koester, *Symbolism*, 196: the Passover lambs were slaughtered between noon and sundown. During the first century, worshippers crowding into the temple court would bring their lambs. The gates closed, a ram’s horn sounded, and the participants began slaughtering their lambs. Josephus observed that the lambs sacrificed for Passover were slayed from the ninth hour till the eleventh [3PM to 5PM] (*J.W.* 6.423).

<sup>96</sup> John Paul Heil, *Blood and Water: The Death and Resurrection of Jesus in John 18-21*, CBQMS 27 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1995), 82-3. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 342-43: Luke 23:35 states, “He handed Jesus over to their will, i.e. to the will of the Jews.” The Jewish leaders had achieved their purpose; also this brought about the fulfillment of Jesus’ saying, “you will lift up the Son of Man” (John 8:28).

Leaving the praetorium, Jesus carried his cross to Golgotha where he was crucified with two others. While on the cross he “said (to fulfill the Scripture), ‘I thirst’” (John 19:28). The Gentile soldiers put a sponge filled with vinegar on “hyssop [ὑσσώπος] and held it to his mouth” (John 19:29). Hyssop played an important role in the rituals of the first Passover (Exod 12:22).<sup>97</sup> Interestingly, the Synoptics while describing the same event recount that the sponge filled with vinegar is placed on a “reed” [κάλαμος] (Mark 15:36; cf. Matt 27:48). Yet, John’s use of hyssop correlates well with Jesus the Lamb of God, seen by the Evangelist as the true paschal sacrifice. As the hyssop was used to sprinkle the poured blood of the lamb on the doorposts, which became a sign of deliverance from death, so does the blood of Jesus, which will be poured for the deliverance of his people (John 19:29 cf. Exod 12:22).<sup>98</sup>

As Jesus received the vinegar, “he said, ‘it is finished’...and gave up his spirit” (John 19:30). The Roman practice of crucifixion allowed the victim to remain on the tree till his or her death, then to be devoured by vultures. In contrast, the Mosaic Law required that corpses should not remain overnight on a tree, “for a hanged man is accursed by God” and will defile the land (Deut 21:22-23). Furthermore, Jesus was crucified on Friday; this was a special Sabbath “a high day” as it was devoted to the sheaf offering (Lev 23:11).<sup>99</sup> The soldiers, following the practice of

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<sup>97</sup> Heil, *Blood and Water*, 101: the soldiers play their part in fulfilling the scripture, but it is “Jesus himself who brings the scripture to completion [Ps 22:16, 19; Ps 69:10, 22]; no one takes Jesus’ life from him. As a good shepherd he lays down his life on his own in accord with the command of his Father” (John 10:18; 18:11).

<sup>98</sup> Nielsen, “The Lamb of God,” 253: the mentioning of the hyssop provides an intertextual relation to the Passover ritual where hyssop was used to apply the blood of the lamb on the doorposts (Exod 12:22). Beasley-Murray, *John*, 352: “It is commonly assumed that the change [to hyssop, ὑσσώπος] was made by the Evangelist in order to indicate that Jesus died as God’s Passover Lamb (1:29)...the giving to Jesus a drink from a sponge on a hyssop stalk is a remote parallel to the sprinkling of blood of a lamb on the door of a house” (Exod 12:22). Morris, *John*, 813-4, n. 71: “since hyssop was used in connection with Passover ceremonies (Exod 12:22), John may be calling attention to Jesus as the perfect Passover sacrifice.” Heil, *Blood and Water*, 101: “This ritual was to be commemorated in future Passover celebrations” (Exod 12:21-27). Barrett, *John*, 553.

<sup>99</sup> Beasley-Murray, *John*, 353: “The note of time gives the clue: it was the Preparation Day. In v 13 that denoted the day before Passover; here it signifies the day before the Sabbath (cf. Mark 15:42), but a very special Sabbath—a “great” day (cf. 7:37) for it coincided with the Passover.” Carson, *John*, 622, clarifies that the second paschal day in this case falling on the Sabbath “was devoted to the very important sheaf offering” (Lev 23:11).

‘crurifragium’ i.e. breaking of the legs, broke the legs of both thieves to speed up their death. As Jesus was already dead “they did not break his legs” (John 19:33). Interestingly, the soldiers, unfamiliar with the Passover practices, conformed to the rituals concerning the lambs to be slaughtered. To emphasize this point, the Evangelist adds a quotation of fulfillment from the OT regarding the paschal lamb: “not a bone of him shall be broken [συντριβήσεται]” (John 19:36; cf. Exod 12:46; Num 9:12). Jesus’ death is interpreted in the light of the paschal sacrificial rituals. The prevention of Jesus’ body from remaining till the next morning also connects with the paschal lambs, which were not to remain until the morning (Exod 12:10). This quotation alludes also to the psalmist who praises God for protecting the righteous one: “He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken” (Ps 34:20).<sup>100</sup>

Furthermore, rather than breaking Jesus’ legs, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear. At once “there came out blood and water,” confirming Jesus’ death (John 19:34; cf. John 1:14).<sup>101</sup> The Evangelist refers to Jesus’ piercing as a fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy: “they shall look on him whom they have pierced [Ὁψονται εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν]” (John 19:37; cf. Zech 12:10).<sup>102</sup> Yet the prophet further describes the salvific dimension by stating: “on that day there

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<sup>100</sup> Heil, *Blood and Water*, 111-12, states that Jesus fulfills God’s plan. Therefore, God now protects him as his suffering just one, not allowing a bone of him to be crushed. This OT scriptural quotation also “confirms Jesus as the sacrificial Passover Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29, 36). Koester, *Symbolism*, 197: the Evangelist correlates Jesus’ death with regulations for the slaughter of the paschal lamb to show “that Jesus’ death was consistent with the scriptural requirements for a perfect Passover sacrifice.”

<sup>101</sup> Carson, *John*, 623-4: against Docetists who denied that Jesus was truly a man that he only *seemed* (*dokeō*, ‘it seems’) to take a human form; cf. n. 4: “Islam continues to take this view: cf. the Quran, *Sura* 4. 156: ‘they did not kill him, neither did they crucify him; it only seemed to be so.’” Cothenet, “le Témoignage,” 405: “vers l’époque de la rédaction ultime du IV<sup>e</sup> Évangile s’est développé le docétisme qui niait le réalité de l’incarnation et donc de la mort du Christ, Jésus n’ayant revêtu qu’une apparences de corps...il nous semble probable que le IV<sup>e</sup> Évangile vise a contrer l’hérésie naissante, notamment dans son récit sur la mort du Christ.”

<sup>102</sup> Barrett, *John*, 558-9: “John accurately follows Zech 12.10 in the Hebrew (והביטו אלי את אשר דקר) ...The LXX at this point diverges and reads *κατωρχήσαντο* [mocked], a reading which must have arisen from a confusion of consonants in the Hebrew; דקר (‘to pierce’) was taken to be רקד (‘to mock’)...John does not indicate the subject of [ὀψονται] ...It is not the look but the piercing that fulfills prophecy that interests him.” Köstenberger, *John*, 553-4, states that the OT figure of the suffering Servant of Isa 53:5, 10, who was “pierced for our transgressions” and “crushed” may have been in John’s mind. Carson, *John*, 627-8.



shall be a fountain opened for the house of David...to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness” (Zech 13:1). Jesus, the one pierced, is himself the fountain that purifies and cleanses from sin; in a stark reversal of all the violence inflicted on him, Jesus’ self-giving through death offers salvation to all those who believe.<sup>103</sup>

As the Baptist has seen [ὀράω] and has borne witness [μαρτυρέω] (John 1:34) that Jesus is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (1:29; cf. 1:36), so the Evangelist has portrayed Jesus as the perfect paschal sacrifice. The eyewitness testimony of the beloved disciple is similar to that of the Baptist: “He who saw [ὀράω] it has borne witness [μαρτυρέω]—his testimony is true...that [we] may believe [πιστεύω]” (19:35), and in believing “have life in his name” (20:31).<sup>104</sup>

## V. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter examined the pertinent Passover and Exodus themes that are fulfilled in John’s account of the public ministry of Jesus. It also analyzed the relevant passages that relate to Jesus’ image as the paschal lamb. In addition, it studied the manner in which the Evangelist ultimately portrays Jesus at his crucifixion as the perfect paschal sacrifice. John believed the Baptist’s testimony and through his Gospel confirmed the salvific message: Jesus is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

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<sup>103</sup> Ridderbos, *John*, 623-4

<sup>104</sup> Barrett, *John*, 557: “The testimony...in v. 35 could be a witness to all three events [the hyssop (v. 29); the unbroken bones (vv. 33 and 36); the mingled blood (v. 34)] in which St John sees Jesus as the Passover Lamb.”

## CHAPTER IV

### Conclusion

This thesis focused on the testimony of the Baptist—“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29, 36)—and its impact on the narrative of the Fourth Gospel. The author believed the words of the Baptist and thus portrayed Jesus as the true paschal sacrifice. In an attempt to understand the depth of the meaning of this rich image and its impact on the Gospel, we probed the Scriptures and other literature of the period.

The first chapter surveyed the most common and accepted views of the background of the “Lamb of God” title in first century Judaism and Christianity. An effort was made to determine the intended reference underlying the word “lamb” whether taken literally or figuratively. The title is also complemented by an indication of the lamb’s mission of taking “away the sin of the world,” which provides a possible atoning perspective. Therefore an analysis of the title was made in light of the use of the lamb in the OT Jewish animal sacrifices. The New Testament and Christian writings of the first century were also examined. This analysis led to the following conclusions regarding each view:

*The Passover lamb:* the narrative in Exodus indicates that the Passover lamb was not a sacrifice of expiation for sin; rather its purpose was to ward off evil. Later on, the Jewish tradition gave a redemptive value to the blood of the lamb. Some commentators interpreted the celebration of Passover throughout biblical narratives as being a “rite of passage” from one condition to another: for example from slavery to freedom. Outside the biblical texts, Philo treats the Passover not only historically but also allegorically: as a passage from the passions to gratitude to God. Josephus on the other hand places an emphasis on the purifying effects of the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the doorposts. Among the Christian writers of the first century

AD, Paul makes reference to the preexistence of the liturgical tradition of the Christian Pascha: “Christ, our Paschal Lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Cor 5:7).

*The Akedah:* the account of the binding of Isaac in Genesis reveals Abraham’s perfect faith and love for God. Even though the sacrifice of Isaac was not consummated, Jewish doctrine interpreted it as such. Rabbinic and midrashic texts commented on Isaac’s willingness to be offered as a burnt sacrifice. Prior to the Christian epoch, the Jewish theology correlates the sacrifice of Isaac with Passover. By the first century AD, the association of the Akedah with the Passover was established in the Jewish tradition. The Christian writings emphasize Abraham’s faithfulness. Some allusions to Genesis 22 are noted in Matthew’s Gospel through his description of the baptism of Jesus as well as in the garden of Gethsemane. These correlations illustrate the possibility that in the first century, Jesus was seen as being prefigured by Isaac. The typology of Jesus “the Lamb of God” being the new Isaac as well as being the ram became more evident through patristic interpretations of Scripture.

*The Tamid:* the sacrificial burnt offering of a lamb by the priests morning and evening was a daily ordinance. During the Second Temple worship, the sacrifice formerly offered at dusk was now presented at three o’clock. Many scholars maintain that in the Christian milieu of the first century, no explicit correlation was made between the Tamid and Jesus. However, the Synoptics provide some allusions to its association with the passion and crucifixion of Jesus.

*The Scapegoat:* on the Day of Atonement, the scapegoat was sent away into the wilderness carrying the transgressions and impurities of Israel. Josephus defines the scapegoat “to be an expiation for the sins of the whole multitude” (*Ant.* 3.241). Among Christian writings in first century AD, the Epistle of Barnabas refers to the image of the scapegoat as a type of Jesus. The Synoptics do not provide definite imagery concerning the scapegoat and the passion

of Christ. Yet some scholars detect allusions to such in Matthew's account of the passion.

*The Suffering Servant of Isaiah:* in the first century AD, there were different interpretations regarding the identity of the servant (Isa 52:13–53:12). Some attributed this imagery as referring to Israel as a whole while others considered the servant to be an individual. In the first century AD the Christian communities through their writings accepted Isaiah 53 as a prophecy referring to Jesus.

The second chapter analyzed the Baptist's eyewitness testimony concerning Jesus, which the Evangelist purposely introduces in the beginning of his Gospel. An exegesis was presented of the pericope containing the "lamb of God" image (John 1:29-34, 36). The examination of the literary structure of John 1 demonstrates that the Evangelist presents the Baptist's testimony as founded on a direct revelation of God and therefore as absolutely reliable. The most common views held by various scholars regarding the Baptist's testimony as well as the less common views were explored and taken into consideration. This study revealed:

*More common views:*

The Passover lamb: the main objection to this interpretation on the part of some scholars relates to the fact that the Passover lamb was not for expiation of sin. Yet, by the close of the OT period all sacrifices were believed to have atoning value.

The suffering servant of Isaiah: this view is attested in early Christian writings that portray Jesus as the suffering Messiah, submitting as a lamb to "the slaughter" of the cross.

*Less common but possible views:*

The Akedah: the "Lamb of God" title possibly echoes God's provision of the ram in the narrative of the Akedah (Genesis 22).

Aramaic background: this view presents the theory that the original, spoken word [lamb] was the Aramaic [ܠܡܒ], which means lamb, boy, or servant. Later on [ܠܡܒ] was translated into Greek by choosing the word [ἀμνός]. As a result Jesus is perceived as Isaiah's servant of the Lord. Another perspective suggests that [ܠܡܒ] was used for Moses, as cited in the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan. Subsequently Jesus is seen as a great liberator, the new Moses.

*Less common and debatable views:*

The existence of different Semitic dialects in Palestine in the first century AD has led some scholars to claim that ambivalence in one language can be reflected in another. Consequently, the Baptist's proclamation might have meant both Lamb of God and Word of God.

The correlation of the "lamb" image with the Messiah or with different titles of Jesus in the Gospel led to the following views:

An apocalyptic lamb: based on Jewish literature outside the Bible, the lamb is a symbol of the Jewish Messiah whose task is to end or abolish sin.

The messianic king: based on scriptural passages regarding the Messiah on whom the Spirit of God rests, the Messiah in this context removes [ôte] and does not carry upon himself [porte] the sin of the world.

A royal Christological title: the lamb image is a *terminus gloriae for the Son of God/Man*.

The third chapter addressed the purpose for which the Evangelist, at the beginning of his Gospel, introduces the Baptist's testimony about Jesus as lamb. As a witness to Jesus' death and resurrection, the writer of the Fourth Gospel believed that Jesus is "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29, 36). John confirms the Baptist's salvific message through

his Gospel and incorporates both the oral and written Christian tradition of the first century AD. The Fourth Gospel connects Jesus' activities and discourses with the Passover and Exodus themes. Ultimately, the Evangelist portrays Jesus as the true paschal lamb in the narrative of his passion and death; his atoning sacrifice brings deliverance and eternal life to all believers.

Moreover, the sequence of three Passovers in Jesus' public ministry is significant:

*The first Passover:* the Evangelist shows that Jesus will be the new Temple where the ultimate sacrifice will take place, replacing the animal sacrifices in the Temple, including the sacrifice of the Passover lamb.

*The second Passover:* Jesus identifies himself as the new manna that surpasses the old. His flesh will be eaten, as was the flesh of the paschal lamb. The reference to his blood anticipates his sacrifice and recalls how the blood of the lamb was poured out. The Evangelist connects the Passover with the eating of the flesh of Jesus, the paschal sacrifice, whom he will present as such in the passion narrative. The real presence of Jesus' flesh and blood is in the Eucharist, which he will institute at the last Passover as recounted in the Synoptic Gospels. In the Feast of Tabernacles, the Evangelist reveals Jesus as the 'I Am' who is at work to bring freedom to his people, surpassing the deliverance offered by the sacrifice of the paschal lamb.

*The third and final Passover:* the author of the Fourth Gospel interweaves the account of Jesus' arrest and passion with the Passover celebration. As an eyewitness, the Evangelist makes an intertextual correlation with the Passover ritual and the slaughtering of the lamb through his description of the various details concerning the Crucifixion. John finally portrays Jesus as the true and perfect paschal sacrifice, to which he testifies and bears "witness...that you also may believe" (John 19:35). He thus reaffirms the Baptist's testimony regarding Jesus (John 1:29, 36).

The Evangelist concludes his Gospel with a statement of purpose: “that you may *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that in *believing* you may have *life* in his name” (John 20:31). Notably, Jesus himself affirms this message and consequently the purpose of the writer of the Gospel: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever *believes* in him should not perish but have *eternal life* (John 3:16).

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