

What is the Passover?

The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ

Living a Life of Love

# THE SOWER

The Sower is the bimonthly magazine of Spirit & Truth Fellowship International

Mar/Apr 2007



Jesus Christ  
OUR PASSOVER

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# Letter From The President

By John Schoenheit

God bless you!

We hope you enjoy this March-April edition of *The Sower*. In this issue we wanted to focus on Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb and help people understand what that means to each of us who is a Christian.

Before even Jesus' disciples knew that he was the Messiah, John the Baptist pointed him out, saying "...Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29b). That statement had much more power and meaning to those who heard it then than it does to most of us today. The reason is that they lived in a time when animals were sacrificed regularly at the Temple in Jerusalem. God's people, the Jews, experienced the feeling of separation from Him in a totally different sense than you or I know it. Because of Christ's sacrifice, any time we feel separated from God, we know we can just come into His presence. We can pray to Him and speak with Him personally, intimately, pouring out our hearts, knowing that because of the work of Christ, God hears everything we say.

That was not so clearly the case before Christ gave his life on the cross. If a believer felt separated from God, the Law of Moses instructed him to bring an offering to approach Him and establish his relationship with Him. The people who heard John the Baptist speak of "the lamb of God" knew the effort it took to buy a lamb without blemish that they could take to the Temple and offer as a burnt offering or fellowship offering (most people were not shepherds and had to buy their lambs). They had to search carefully in the markets for a lamb without blemish, knowing full well that the priests at the Temple would inspect any animal they brought, and if it had a blemish, would reject it. They also knew the monetary cost of being in fellowship with God, because animals without blemishes were not cheap. Even when they found one, it was only good as a one-time offering, and they would have to buy another the next time they needed a fellowship or sin offering.

Therefore, they must have been amazed, astounded really, when John the Baptist pointed his finger at a regular looking guy in regular looking clothes, and most certainly with excitement in his voice, said, "...Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29b-RASV). I would have loved to have been there to share that moment with John. Reading the Gospels, I can almost hear the excitement in his voice as he looked upon him for whom the world had waited for some four thousand years, the Lamb who would take away the sin of the world. Oh, wondrous glory! My sins taken away! Thank God for that! God help me if I would have to bear them myself, or worse, appear before the Lord Jesus on Judgment Day full of my own sin.

Our lives can be so challenging, difficult, and even heartbreaking that we can forget about what Jesus has done for us and the joy we should feel every day that someone else paid for our sins and provided for us a place in heaven. Because of the work of Christ, God "passed over" my sin, and yours. We "passed" the test, and are assured of being in Paradise. Because of the work of Christ, we do not have to work to be saved. Rather, we can simply

place our faith in him, knowing that his sacrifice was sufficient to cleanse us all from sin. You can bet that when John pointed to Jesus and said to those around him, "...Look! The Lamb of God..." that they did not continue to go about their business. They stopped and looked, and kept on looking.

Perhaps that is a good lesson for us in this Passover (Easter) season. Let us each take some extra time to look at the Lamb of God. We can take time to read the Gospels, pray, meditate, and think about what it means to have our sins taken away. Yes, life is busy, and hard, but it can be much more enjoyable when we focus on how much Jesus Christ has done for us, rather than how many things we need to do. Take time this month to thank God that the Lamb has taken away your sin and assured you a place in Eternity.

Passed Over from Death to Life,

*John Schoenheit*

# The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ

By John A. Lynn

As John Schoenheit points out in his article in this issue of *The Sower*, Jesus Christ was the “Passover Lamb” who was sacrificed for our sins. In this article, I want to focus on the definition of a “sacrifice.” We will examine what it was that Jesus sacrificed, what were the benefits to him (and thereby to us) for his doing so, and what it will look like for us to follow in his steps. I think it will become clear that we too should be making sacrifices in our own lives for the good of others.

## **1 Corinthians 5:7 and 8 (NKJV)<sup>1</sup>**

(7) Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

(8) Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

There is much figurative language in the above verses, but the point I want us to notice here is that the truth in verse 7—that Jesus gave his life for our sins—is the basis for the action that verse 8 encourages us to take—to live our lives with sincerity and truth. As Scripture says, Jesus Christ is the example for each of us, and we are therefore to walk in his steps (1 Pet. 2:21). Let us look at a contemporary dictionary definition of sacrifice: “The surrender or destruction of something prized or desirable for the sake of something considered as having a higher or more pressing claim.”

Now that is provocative. Think about it—this connotes a value system in which one thing, while deemed valuable and thus not easily let go of, is not considered as valuable as another thing in one’s overall estimation. This involves the exercise of one’s free will and the power we each have to make choices.

What was Jesus called to sacrifice? His very life. Psalm 22 prophetically depicts the crucifixion, resurrection, and exaltation of the Messiah, with the first 18 verses pointing to his torture and death, and the last 10 verses pointing to his resurrection and his reign in the Millennial Kingdom. In between are the following pivotal verses, which poignantly foreshadow his crying out to God for deliverance from the grave.

## **Psalm 22:19-21 (NKJV)**

(19) But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me!

(20) Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog.

(21) Save Me from the lion’s mouth And from the horns of the wild oxen! You have answered Me.

In that vein, it is noteworthy to compare the attitude of Socrates just prior to his death with that of Jesus Christ before his impending torture and execution. Socrates threw a party, gathering his friends to help him celebrate his exodus from this life via drinking the poison hemlock. Jesus,

on the other hand, agonized alone in the Garden of Gethsemane to such an extent that the Greek text says he was “crushed with anguish” (Luke 22:44-NKJV “being in agony”).

Why the stark difference in their attitudes? Was it because Socrates had a better understanding of life than Jesus did? No, it was because Jesus had a truer understanding of death than did Socrates. Socrates erroneously believed what many people today believe (even most Christians), that death is the immediate “doorway” to a better life in some other realm.

Jesus Christ, however, knew the truth that death, as accurately defined in the Word of God, is “the end, or the absence of, life.”<sup>2</sup> By definition, one cannot be both dead and alive. Jesus knew, therefore, that if he chose to step into the theretofore unbridged abyss of death, the only way back to life would be via his heavenly Father keeping His promise to raise him from the dead (Gen. 22:1-13; Ps. 16:10). That is why, in absolute contrast to Socrates, Jesus’ decision to sacrifice his life was not a flippant one.

What were the promised benefits that motivated Jesus Christ to lay down his precious life, which was most definitely “something prized or desirable” to him. What was the stupendous “something [that he] considered as having a higher or more pressing claim” compared to the preservation of his own life? The following verses answer that question:

### **Hebrews 12:1 and 2**

(1) Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

(2) Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The “joy set before” Jesus was the great truth woven throughout the Old Testament that if he would go the distance as the only man who could live a sinless life and die a torturous death as the true Passover Lamb, he would be raised to newness of life, and so would all those who ever believed on him. He would reign over the world for a thousand years and later rule as second-in-command to God on a new earth, enjoying everlasting life with all the redeemed throughout the ages.

Because Jesus knew who he was, and that there was no one else who could do what he was called to do, he chose to walk the path set before him, which called for him to sacrifice his life. Now you and I are members in particular of the Body of Christ, representing him in this fallen world. So who are you? What are you called to sacrifice? And how will that look, behaviorally speaking? What will the benefits be to you for so doing?

For you and me as Christians, the Church Epistles are where we find our identity, our purpose, and our destiny. There is much relevant truth in the Old Testament, the Gospels, and elsewhere in Scripture, but for it to be applicable to our lives, it must fit with, and cannot contradict, the truth found in Romans through Thessalonians. In fact, a precise knowledge of the

curriculum found in the Church Epistles is the only basis for extracting and applying the many other great truths found all through the Bible.

Only in the Church Epistles do we find who we are in Christ, and, in the context of this article, that is our basis for understanding that we can “lay down our lives” (behaviorally speaking, in our relationships with others) with the assurance that what we are laying down (sacrificing, giving up, putting to death) are the selfish aspects of the old nature that dwells within us (Rom. 7:18). This “death” of our old self—our false self, if you will—is the only way to real life, that is, living according to our new and true nature, which is designed by God to revel in putting others before ourselves. Each of us can “get our kicks” only from walking according to the new nature within us. You can see that in Romans 7:22-NKJV (“For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man”) where the root Greek word translated “delight” is *hedomai*, from which we get the English word “hedonism,” meaning “pleasure for pleasure’s sake.”

The Word of God is clear that in His sight you are dead to sin and alive in Christ. When God looks at you, He sees you as completely righteous in Christ. Each of us is thus equipped to practically live out this truth by putting to death whatever belongs to our earthly nature (Col. 3:5). Whenever we do, we find newness of life. Consider the following verses, which are foundational to understanding our unshakeable righteousness and our ability to walk in newness of life:

**Romans 6:3-7**

(3) Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

(4) We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

(5) If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

(6) For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

(7) because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

So what do the Church Epistles have to say about sacrifice? As we consider that question, we should expect whatever we find to flow in line with the principles of Christ’s sacrifice, because we are to follow in his steps.

**Romans 12:1 and 2 (NASB)<sup>3</sup>**

(1) I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

(2) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

What?! Do I detect a flaming oxymoron? What on earth is a “living sacrifice” when, by definition, a “sacrifice” is dead? This obvious figure of speech is designed to arrest our attention

and reinforce to us the aforementioned truth that sacrificing the selfish aspects of our sin nature is the only way to really live life and love people as God desires us to.

No doubt you are familiar with the following exhortation from Jesus himself:

**John 15:12 and 13**

(12) My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

(13) Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

This same truth is echoed in Ephesians, where we find another use of the word “sacrifice.”

**Ephesians 5:1 and 2**

(1) Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children

(2) and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

As Jesus vividly demonstrated, true love requires, and is evidenced by, sacrificing some of what we want for the benefit of others with whom we are in relationship. Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice on the Cross, and that is why we can follow suit by “dying to self” (see Luke 9:23 and 24) day by day, for his sake. Hebrews 2:15 speaks of people who all their lives are subject to bondage because of their fear of death. At the bottom life, death is always equated with loss, and the fear of losing something deemed valuable is what often drives people. If we grasp the truth in the following verses—that our real life is secure in Christ—we will more joyously lay down/give up those less valuable elements of our selves.

**Colossians 3:1-4**

(1) Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

(2) Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

(3) For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

(4) When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

So what are some ways that we as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ can lay down our lives for our friends (and other people)? First of all, doing something for someone else is in the category of “service,” and the following verse clearly equates sacrifice and service:

**Philippians 2:17**

But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.

Paul’s heart was like that of Jesus Christ. He understood that pouring out his life in service to others was a key to his own joy. How can we pour out our lives to others? One way is to share the Word of God with them. Another is to pray for them. Another is to be there for them in times of trial. Think about an exhausted mother staying up through the night with a sick baby, or a faithful husband caring day after day for his aging wife beset with Alzheimer’s, or a pastor sitting with an ailing friend. Sacrificing ourselves like that for others is showing them true love.

All of these things require that, in a healthy way, we set aside our own needs and wants and take our time for another person. We could also “lay down our lives” for others by sharing with them some of our money or material things, which we have as a result of taking time to work. Look at the following verse:

**Philippians 4:18**

I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

I assert that the wellspring of our being able to pour out our lives to others is our personal intimacy with our God and with our Lord Jesus (2 Tim. 4:17, etc.). Strengthening that relationship requires sacrifice on our part, that is, laying down anything in us that stands between us and them. And each of us has a lot of “stuff” in our sin nature that relentlessly tries to hinder our relationship with God by getting us to hold on to our selfish desires at the expense of having something greater from our Father. Consider the following verse, written by David following his sin with Bathsheba:

**Psalms 51:17**

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

When we give up our pride, our arrogance, our defense mechanisms, and our infernal Adamic shucking and jiving, and just “get naked” before our Father and our Lord, they sweep us up in their arms and infuse us with newness of life in whatever way we need it.

I believe this is what Paul is talking about in the following two sections of Scripture—that when each of us sacrifices our old self by subjugating our will to God’s in a particular situation (usually involving other people), we identify with the death of Jesus Christ, and thus with his resurrection also, as his life within us is manifest in our lives.

**2 Corinthians 4:10 and 11 (NKJV)**

(10) always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

(11) For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

**Philippians 3:10 and 11**

(10) I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

(11) and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from [*ek*=out from among] the dead.

Paul is assured of attaining his physical resurrection at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, but I think this verse also speaks figuratively of the newness of life we receive from God when we choose to “die to self” in our daily interactions with others. Not all Christians make this

choice, and this is indicated by the preposition *ek*, which shows that only those who do so receive this “resurrection.”

In regard to our personal relationship with our Father and our Lord as the bedrock of our lives, let us note one other use of the word “sacrifice” that I think is most pertinent.

### **Hebrews 13:15 (KJV)**

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

Praising (and worshiping) God and the Lord Jesus is vital to our spiritual well being because it orients us to them as the source of all that we need. When we exalt God and Christ, our focus shifts from our own needs to their fathomless sufficiency. When we choose to praise our God and our Lord, we are sacrificing whatever else we could be doing with our minds and hearts, and showing them our love and gratitude. This is especially true if we do not feel like praising. Of course, speaking in tongues is a primary way each Christian can give thanks well (1 Cor. 14:17-NKJV).<sup>4</sup>

It is the magnanimous sacrifice of Jesus Christ that has made it possible for you and me to experience the joy of walking in his steps. He is with us, closer than our breath, each step of the way, and he is ready, willing, and able to work within us to make us like him. Because of what he did, all the way through the Cross, you are now righteous, justified, sanctified, and able to manifest his heart to a dying world. Let’s allow the Word to speak in closing this article.

### **Hebrews 10:9-14**

(9) Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second.

(10) And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

(11) Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

(12) But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.

(13) Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool,

(14) because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

### **Endnotes**

1. Scripture quotations marked (NKJV) are taken from the New King James Version®. © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

2. See our book, *Is There Death After Life* by Mark Graeser, John Lynn, & John Schoenheit (Christian Educational Services, Indianapolis, IN 2004) and [www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com) TOPIC: Death.

3. Scripture quotations marked (NASB) are taken from the New American Standard Bible®, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977 by The Lockman Foundation Used by permission.

4. See our website, [www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com), TOPIC: Manifestations; article: “What is speaking in tongues and why does God say to do it.”

# The Contender

## What is the Passover?

By John W. Schoenheit

The importance of the Passover to Christians is established in the Church Epistles, the letters written directly to the Christian Church, in that they refer to Jesus as the Passover Lamb.

### **1 Corinthians 5:7**

Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

To understand this verse, we need to know what the Passover lamb is, and why the Passover was instituted by God as one of the most important feasts on the Jewish calendar. As we study the Passover Feast and the Passover lamb, we will gain a deepened appreciation for God and His Son, and strengthen our relationship with them.

There were three major feasts celebrated in Israel each year. These were so significant that God commanded every Israelite male to go to Jerusalem for each of them.

### **Exodus 23:14-17**

(14) “Three times a year you are to celebrate a festival to me.

(15) “Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in that month you came out of Egypt. “No one is to appear before me empty-handed.

(16) “Celebrate the Feast of Harvest [Pentecost] with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in your field. “Celebrate the Feast of Ingathering [Tabernacles] at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field.

(17) “Three times a year all the men are to appear before the Sovereign LORD.

The “Feast of Unleavened Bread” mentioned in verse 15 above was the seven day feast that began with the eating of the Passover meal. Because of its association with the Passover meal, it was also known as “the Feast of Passover.”

The Feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles were important enough to God that He stated on several different occasions that all the Israelite males were to go to Jerusalem to celebrate them. In Exodus 34:24 God made the promise to Israel that if they would keep these three feasts, He would protect their land.

### **Exodus 34:24**

I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your territory, and no one will covet your land when you go up three times each year to appear before the LORD your God.

When the men of Israel did come before God, they were to bring a gift that was in proportion to the blessings they had received from God.

**Deuteronomy 16:16 and 17**

(16) Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks [Pentecost] and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed:

(17) Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.

Although each of the three feasts was important, the Passover was considered by many to be the most important of all. It is specifically mentioned as being celebrated by Joshua (Josh. 5:10ff), Solomon (2 Chron. 8:11ff), Hezekiah (2 Chron. 30:1ff), Josiah (2 Kings 23:21ff); and Ezra (Ezra 6:9ff).

To study and understand the Passover, we must go back into the books of Genesis and Exodus. It is impossible to expound on all the wonderful lessons of the Passover in this short article, and I encourage you to take time to read the last half of Genesis and the first part of Exodus. The most important chapters would be Genesis 37 through Exodus 15 because they give the background of the Passover and tell of its significance to the Israelites leaving Egypt.

The nation of Israel became slaves in Egypt as a result of a number of sins. For example, his jealous brothers sold Joseph into slavery in Egypt. It is true that this eventually worked out for good, because Joseph rose to leadership in Egypt and was able to provide for his family during the famine. But that is actually an example of God turning a lemon into lemonade, because He surely would have provided for Israel during the famine in another way had Joseph not been in slavery and prison for more than a decade.

Another sin was when Israel, after leaving the Promised Land and going into Egypt during the famine, stayed there rather than returning to the land God had given them. They did so because they were given "...the best of all Egypt..." and were enjoying "...the fat of the land" (Gen. 45:18 and 20). This sounds like what happens to a lot of people today. It is easy to be influenced by the glitz and glamour of the world and leave the things of God, which often demand so much from us.

Israel stayed in Egypt after the famine, and eventually the Egyptians enslaved them. They were able to do this because they had the most powerful army around in those days, thanks to the wealth that was brought into the country during the tenure of Joseph. The reason the Egyptians gave for enslaving the Israelites was a hollow one, but sounded good politically. Pharaoh said to the Egyptians:

**Exodus 1:10**

Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."

The fact is that there was no reason to believe that Israel, which had worked in harmony with the Egyptians for decades, would suddenly join Egypt's enemies (as if the enemies of Egypt would offer co-rulership to Israel or something of that sort). If anything, they would have fought alongside Egypt against any aggressor. Furthermore, if that were a genuine concern, then the obvious solution would be to simply tell Israel that they were no longer welcome in Egypt and send them back to their homeland, Canaan.

Probably the reason in Pharaoh's mind for enslaving Israel was economically motivated; they were slave labor. However, the actual reason for enslaving Israel was a spiritual one: Israel was God's people, out from whom would come the Messiah/Redeemer, and the Devil hated them. He comes to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10), and he would have loved to kill off all Israel, and thus thwart God's plan for a Savior, who was to come through Israel. The way Satan worked in Pharaoh to do that would have taken some time, but it would have worked: he would have killed every male baby that was born to Israel (Exod. 1:16). Eventually, their women would all intermarry with Egyptians, and the national identity of Israel would be gone. No one knows exactly why, but Pharaoh apparently stopped having the male babies killed, perhaps due to public outcry, not long after Moses was born.

God's first attempt to free Israel through Moses failed miserably when he killed an Egyptian, supposing that the Israelites would understand that through him God was going to free them, but they did not understand that at all.

#### **Acts 7:25**

Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.

Moses was forced to flee Egypt to save his life, and he lived in Midian for forty years, after which God again asked him to deliver the Israelites. Moses went back to Egypt, and Exodus 5-14 give the record of the plagues that came upon Egypt, the Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Israel leaving Egypt, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his army.<sup>1</sup>

God gave the Israelites instructions about the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread a number of days before the tenth and last plague, the death of the firstborn in Egypt (Exod. 12:29). We will start our examination of the record at the start of Chapter 12.

#### **Exodus 12:1 and 2**

- (1) The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt,
- (2) "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.

Let us not miss the point in verse two. Since the time of Adam and Eve, the first month of the year for the people of God had been Tishri, which occurs in our September or October. We must keep in mind that the Israelite calendar was lunar, so it "moved" in relation [changed, as compared] to our fixed calendar of 365 ¼ days. The Lunar calendar is 354 days. In one grand pronouncement, God told Moses that the first month of the year for Israel was to be "Abib" (cp. Exod. 13:4), which comes from the new ears of grain, which can be first harvested in that month. Later, the name "Nisan" ("the month of flowers") was used instead of Abib (Neh. 2:1).

By divine command, God moved the start of the Jewish calendar by six months. It would be similar to God appearing to the President of the United States and telling him that the first month of the year will be July, not January (probably not a bad idea as the fourth of July commemorates the start of our nation). What Exodus 12:2 tells the astute reader is that the Exodus, and also the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, mean enough to God that He wanted them to live powerfully in the memory of the people. As there was a genuine sense in which the Exodus began the national status of Israel, so it would start the calendar year as well.

### **Exodus 12:3**

Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb [flock animal] for his family, one for each household.

There are some wonderful lessons we can glean from this verse. One is that God did not spring the tenth plague on Egypt without warning. He is always loving and merciful, and His mercy included giving Egypt ample time to repent of their hardness of heart and allow the Israelites to go into the desert and worship. There was probably a week or so between Moses warning Pharaoh, and the tenth plague, as we see by paying attention to what took place and what had to be done. First, Moses warned Pharaoh of the death of the firstborn.

### **Exodus 11:4 and 5 (ESV)<sup>2</sup>**

(4) So Moses said [to Pharaoh], “Thus says the LORD: About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt,

(5) and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle.

After Moses spoke to Pharaoh, God told Moses that the Israelites were to select a lamb or goat on the tenth day of the month (Exod.12:3). It took time, maybe two or three days, to get that information out to the millions of Israelites so that each family could select an animal on the tenth. That would take us back to the eighth day of Abib, so Moses would likely have gone before Pharaoh around then or a little before then. The death of the firstborn did not occur until midnight of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib (the Passover lamb was slain on the 14<sup>th</sup>, (Exod.12:6), and the 15<sup>th</sup> began at sunset. The firstborn were killed at midnight on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

So even if Moses went out from Pharaoh on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Abib and told the people to select a lamb the next day, Pharaoh still would have had six days to remember that every other plague foretold by Moses had come to pass, realize that his people, and even his own family, were in grave danger, and repent and let Israel go. More likely, Pharaoh had a week or more to consider and repent, but stubbornly hardened his heart, more concerned about his pride and position than his family and his people.

Another lesson to learn from Exodus 12:3 is that the sacrifice whose blood would be acceptable to put on the door of the houses was to be a “flock animal.” Unfortunately, almost every English version reads “lamb.” However, the Hebrew word is *seh*, and referred generically to a flock animal (usually, in that culture, sheep and goats). Through time, and because of its

association with both godliness and other sacrifices, the offering was usually a lamb, and became known as “the Passover lamb.” Nevertheless, it is very important for students of the Bible to know that the sacrifice was actually a “flock animal.” This reflects upon the fact that Jesus Christ was to be one from the flock, or as Deuteronomy 18:15 says, one “...from among your own brothers...” Jesus was as human as you and I. He was taken out from “the flock” of humanity, and humanity is composed of those of us who believe (the sheep) and those who do not (the goats).

#### **Exodus 12:4**

If any household is too small for a whole lamb [flock animal], they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb [flock animal] needed in accordance with what each person will eat.

In verse 4, God makes provision for each family. Although God is concerned that small families not be burdened by having to cook a lot more than they can eat, the overall context of the chapter shows that He is more concerned that each Israelite partakes of the Passover meal. This too, is a type, or shadow, of Jesus Christ. Just as there was enough lamb for everyone, God wants us all to know that anyone who so chooses can partake of Jesus Christ. There is, so to speak, enough Redeemer to go around. Salvation is for everyone. No one need come to God and say, “There was no provision for my hunger and my salvation.” If you are hungry, there is sustenance in Jesus Christ. If you are unsaved, there is saving grace for you in the Savior. Never think that you, or anyone, is left outside of God’s provision and grace. There is enough Messiah for everyone.

#### **Exodus 12:5**

The animals [flock animals] you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.

The Passover sacrifice, like others, had to be without defect. This is one of the reasons why Jesus had to be the Son of God, not the son of Joseph. Furthermore, he had to remain sinless through his life, which he did.

#### **Exodus 12:6**

Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.

The word “twilight” is the Hebrew phrase “between the evenings.” The Hebrew day started at sunset (and remember, it is still light for a while after sunset), so what is “late evening” to us started their new day. Their “early evening” started at what we would call our early to mid afternoon, when the sun was noticeably starting its downward journey. The Passover was to be killed “between the evenings,” between early afternoon and sunset, and Jesus, our Passover, died precisely then, at the ninth hour [which is 3 P.M. today] (Matt. 27:46; Luke 23:44).

**Exodus 12:7-10**

(7) Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

(8) That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.

(9) Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire—head, legs and inner parts.

(10) Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.

The Passover sacrifice was to be roasted over the fire, not cooked any other way. This is symbolic of the life and death that Jesus lived, one of fiery trials. That aspect of the symbol speaks of Jesus. But there is another aspect of the symbol that speaks of us. The Passover sacrifice was to be roasted with its inner parts intact. It was not to be gutted and cleaned as animals usually were. Roasting the animal with its inner parts, especially the intestines and bladder, can add a bitter taste to the meat. Jesus Christ suffered fiery trials, but those of us committed to him are to share in his sufferings, as many verses in the New Testament reveal.

**Exodus 12:11 and 12**

(11) This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover.

(12) "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.

God wanted the Israelites to have the proper perspective of that first Passover meal. It was part of the great provision of God, and was powerfully symbolic of the Messiah's work and accomplishments. It was not to be a relaxing meal. Rather, it was to be eaten in haste while fully dressed for travel—including staff in hand—as an act of faith. God said that he would strike down the firstborn that night, and that as a result the Egyptians would let them go (Exod. 11:1). So Israel was to have faith that God's promise was true, and be ready to leave Egypt right away. Christians, too, should live in faith on a daily basis, looking for our blessed hope of ultimate deliverance—the appearing of our Lord Jesus to gather us to him.

God also made the point to the people that what happened to the Egyptians was a judgment on the gods of Egypt. The gods of Egypt were powerless to provide for, and protect, their country. In light of that, it is astounding that less than three months later, when Moses was on Mt. Sinai and absent from his people, they made a calf god and pronounced that it had brought them out of Egypt. Faith can quickly give way to faithlessness and deception unless we are vigilant to maintain it. That is why it is important to be regular in activities such as prayer, fellowship with other committed Christians, and Bible study.

**Exodus 12:13**

The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

We need to pay special attention to this verse. If we are not careful readers, and thoughtful about the Word of God, we will be misled. It is easy to read into this verse that God needed the

blood of the sacrifice to protect Israel. He did not. God did not need to have the Israelites shed the blood of a Passover animal to ensure their protection. This can be easily proven by studying each of the plagues that befell Egypt. God had protected Israel from other plagues without any sacrifices or blood being shed.

Of the ten plagues, the fourth was swarms of flies, but God protected the Israelites from the flies, and there were no flies where the Israelites lived (Exod. 8:22). The fifth plague was the death of Egyptian livestock, but God protected Israel, and no Israelite livestock died (Exod. 9:4-7). The seventh plague was hail, but no hail fell where the Israelites lived (Exod. 9:26). The ninth was darkness over the land of Egypt for three days, but God allowed the light to shine where the Israelites lived (Exod. 10:23). God did not need the blood of the Passover animal to protect Israel from the tenth plague any more than He needed it to protect Israel from the other plagues.

If God did not need the blood of a sacrifice to protect Israel, then why put it on the doorframes of the houses? The answer is that the Passover animal that was killed and roasted that night, and whose blood was put on the doorframes, pointed to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and his provision for the people of God. Israel could escape Egypt without the death and blood of a Passover animal, but they could not escape the bondage of sin and death without God's passing over their sin and forgiving them. The reason for the Passover sacrifice was to point to, and point out, Jesus Christ as the true provision of God for people's deliverance. No wonder God set the Passover as a lasting ordinance for Israel.

#### **Exodus 12:14 and 17b**

(14) "This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance.

(17b) ...Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.

Year after year Israel celebrated the Passover and looked back to their deliverance from Egypt, the land of bondage. However, in their celebration, they were also to look forward to their Messiah, who would be the true Passover Lamb. Now we Christians look back upon our Passover Lamb, who once and for all took away the sins of the world.

#### **1 Corinthians 5:7 and 8**

(7) Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

(8) Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

Israel kept the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread by rituals that included cleansing their houses of yeast, which is sometimes called leaven (Exod. 12:14-20). Those things were only a shadow of the things that are today. You and I, as followers of Jesus Christ, are to keep the Passover, not by getting yeast out of our houses, but by getting the "yeast" of malice and wickedness out of our lives, and by living lives of sincerity and truth. Let each of us do our best to cleanse our lives from evil and ungodliness, and from our hearts follow the ways of God.

#### **Endnotes**

1. Pharaoh died in the sea along with his army, despite the movies, which tell the story as if he lived after his

army drowned. A wonderful book on the Exodus is: *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications*, by Donovan Courville.

2. English Standard Version, The Holy Bible, English Standard Version™ © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved.

# Don't Be Passed Over

Most of us know the pain of being passed over for something we wanted. We might have been passed over to be part of a sports team in High School, or passed over for a part in the school play, or a choir, or to attend the college we wanted, or for a job or a promotion we wanted. But as painful as it was to be passed over, life went on and we adjusted to the reality of the situation. However, there is an event coming for which no one who is thinking straight would want to be passed over, and that is being saved and being given everlasting life.

The difference between being passed over for a ball team, a job, or a promotion and being passed over for *everlasting life* is profound, to say the least, and there are some important differences. For one thing, being passed over in school or work was out of our control. We wanted to be included, but others made the choice for us. However, when it comes to having everlasting life, the situation is reversed. God has given each of us the opportunity to choose salvation. Furthermore, it is His will that we do, as the following verse shows:

## **1 Timothy 2:4a**

[God] who wants all men to be saved...

Being saved is not like getting into the school play or on a ball team where there are only so many openings available. When they are full, too bad for those who don't make it. God, however, wants the future heaven and earth to be packed full of people, and whether or not we will be included is totally up to us. If you want everlasting life, you can have it.

Another important difference between being passed over for a ball team or a promotion, and being passed over for everlasting life is that if we do not accept everlasting life we do not simply adjust and live without it. Not to choose life is to choose death, and for those in that category, life will end after the final judgment.

## **Romans 6:23**

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the words of John 3:16, if we do not choose life, we will "perish." God made people to love life and to want to live. That is one reason we feel so badly when someone, even someone we do not know, dies. Furthermore, life in the future will be much more enjoyable than this life, because it will be free of the consequences of sin. There will be no sickness, no death, no hunger, no war—none of the things that make this life so difficult. Why would anyone not want to live in such a wonderful place? Don't be passed over for everlasting life. Salvation is available right now; just follow God's easy directions:

## **Romans 10:9**

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Those directions are easy because God wants everyone to be saved. Don't be passed over, accept Jesus as your Lord today.

## Partner Profile: Joddi Bastian

Dear Sower,

Father God is awesome and Jesus Christ is our Lord!

I live in Jakarta, the capitol city of Indonesia, on the island of Java. My wife's name is Peggy and we have three children. Paul is almost 23, Melissa is 20, and Myrna is 16. My father became very sick (kidney failure) when I was eight years of age, and died when I was 16. His struggle, suffering, and eventual death left an unrest in me, and I felt that life is vain. When I was 21 my mother gave me the opportunity to go to and study in Germany in the city of Stuttgart.

After finishing my studies in engineering, I took a job in Hamburg, Germany. In this city my unrest culminated and it became so clear to me that unless there is a God, life is just a bad joke. That's how I reasoned at that point in time, and so I started my search for God. I had basically no specific religious background and could begin by scrutinizing any religion I chose. Since I was living in Europe, I thought it would be logical to start with Christianity since most of the people in Europe are Christians, or so I thought.

I started to go to a Christian Students' Fellowship, and the second time I went I asked them where I could go to learn about the Bible. To my astonishment they didn't know how to help me, but that is where I met a Christian on a "missionary" program (an American lady) who told me that she could teach me the Bible.

I got involved in her ministry for several years and in 1979 I left Germany to go to the USA to attend a one-year course at a Bible College in Kansas. In 1980, I went back to Indonesia and have lived here ever since. Only in 1989 did I start to realize that something had gone wrong with that ministry, but it was difficult for me to get detailed information.

Slowly I found out what had happened; I was shocked, devastated, frustrated, and didn't know what to think and what to do. Many years later, thanks to the Internet, I found your ministry and I emailed you. I instantly felt that there was something special about this ministry. I started to order your books and was really impressed with what you teach.

My confidence began to grow, and a few years ago I signed up for your "Partnership Plan." This ministry is giving me answers that bring peace, deliverance, and healing to my heart and mind. The logic and sound teachings that you offer through books, tapes, and *The Sower* magazine are just phenomenal to me.

Our ministry is very special and unique in how we serve the Body of Christ worldwide, I want to be part of it, and the "Partnership Plan" is the least I can do! Recently I doubled my monthly contribution because I feel that this ministry is now on a higher level of outreach and service and needs more "fuel" to sustain the growth.

It is a great privilege for me to have my Partner Profile put in this issue of *The Sower* that is being distributed to so many brothers and sisters in Christ around the globe, and herewith I take the opportunity to wish you all God's best and blessings. We live in very challenging times, so let's "hold hands" to stand strong.

Joddi Bastian  
Jakarta, Indonesia

# Fuel for the Fire: Living a Life of Love

## By Ryan Maher

I remember when I first became a Christian. I was a sophomore in high school, and my uncle fed me book after book by many Christian authors. I learned a lot about the Bible, but it was based on what those people told me it said. Rather than reading it critically for myself, I stood on the shoulders of others. Well, when I got involved with this ministry, I was amazed and impressed by how they helped me learn how to study the Bible for myself. I felt very empowered and confident in my ability to use the research tools that were given to me.

A few years later, one of my best friends was killed while serving in the Army over in Afghanistan. The loss of my dear friend Brett was tragic and very painful. As I processed through this tough time, I was reminded of how much of a blessing he was to be around and how he lived his life for Christ. I joined many of Brett's friends the night after his death to cry, tell stories, laugh, and remember our dear friend. There was story after story about how people just felt loved by Brett and that he was always joyful.

Two years later, I still remember Brett as an amazing example of a man who lived a life of love. His legacy convicts me to be more loving, more giving, and more focused on others rather than myself. I've been going back to the basics lately in my personal study time in the Word, and what could be more basic than loving God and loving others?

You may be familiar with the following verses, which are about as basic as we can get in understanding true Christianity:

### **Matthew 22:37-39**

(37) Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’

(38) This is the first and greatest commandment.

(39) And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

The man who came to Jesus asked him only for the first and greatest commandment. Why then did Jesus add the second in his answer? Because the two are inseparable, in that the only way to know the degree to which someone loves God is by how he treats *people*.

Along this line, I recently saw a couple of verses in 1 John that pierced my very soul. They lay out a little more clearly how the greatest commandment and the second work together.

### **1 John 4:20 and 21**

(20) If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.

(21) And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

These verses are very clear: The only way to measure one's love for God is by how he deals with people. This may come as a harsh reality to you, as it did to me. If you were to ask the common Christian if he loves God, he would probably say, "Absolutely." I know I would like to think that I always love God, but Scripture clearly says that if I do not love my brother, I do not really love God. What a tough standard to measure up to! Or is it?

Think about it. The entire Bible has an overarching theme that God has woven into its very fabric, and that is *love*. Sometimes I am not sure how I should show up in a particular situation, or what the will of God is therein, but I can be certain of one thing, I am *always* supposed to love.

So, do you really love God? Are you really loving people? Can others see the love of Christ in me? I ask you these tough questions because I am asking them of myself. For much of my Christian life, I focused on gaining as much knowledge of the written Word as possible, but what good is that knowledge if I'm not walking in love?

### **1 Corinthians 13:1-3**

(1) If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

(2) If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

(3) If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Do you see that? God is not as concerned with how much knowledge you have or the greatness of your faith as He is with how you love others. I'm not downplaying the importance of knowing the written Word, but I am stressing the importance of loving people in words and in deeds.

### **1 John 3:18**

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

I don't want to just "say" that I love people; I want my life to be a life of love, proven by my actions. If you consider yourself a loving person, you might ask yourself: "What have I done today that is loving?" What have you done this month? I think that the famous "Golden Rule" gives every human being a benchmark to know what is love and what is not, in that we each know what feels like love to us, and we can use that as the standard for dealing with others. All of us can think back to a time we felt loved, even if it was in a very small way.

I challenge you to look closely at what it means to love people with true, biblical love. 1 Corinthians 13 is a great place to start.

### **1 Corinthians 13:4-8a**

(4) Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

(5) It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

- (6) Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.
- (7) It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.
- (8a) Love never fails....

For a more in-depth look at what it means to love with a godly love, please go online and visit TruthOrTradition.com – Topic: Love. Also look for the audio teaching, “Love is Giving” from December 2004 by John Schoenheit in our bookstore.

As Christians, we are called to be witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ, and whether we like it or not, non-believers will notice the way we live our lives. Many of them base their perception of Christianity on how they see Christians acting, and, in my opinion, Christians are one of the biggest reasons why some people reject Christianity. Many who profess to follow Christ do not love the way he did. Jesus told his disciples: “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

Love can do amazing things. It can fix problems, mend relationships, and change hearts.

The following are two verses that show the power of love:

**Proverbs 10:12**

Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs.

**1 Peter 4:8**

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

To conclude this brief overview of some of the convictions living in my heart, I ask you to love. Love not out of guilt or obligation, but with a pure heart that knows what Scripture says and is committed to changing lives. My good friend Brett lived a life of love, and people remember him for the love he showed. I want that in my life, and I’m sure you do too. May we all strive to love God, and each other, all the days of our lives. He promises that *it will be worth it*.

# My Hero

By Jeff Blackburn

I love the way that, in their respective translations of the Bible, Martin Luther and James Moffatt<sup>1</sup> rendered the phrase “mighty God” in Isaiah 9:6 as “mighty hero”<sup>2</sup> or “divine hero.” I encourage you to study the information listed under endnote two to really appreciate why they translated it that way. To me, Jesus is not only my Lord and Savior, he is also my hero.

I spent 21 years in the United States Air Force, and, as a military man, I love the depth of meaning in the word “hero.” Growing up, I used to think of Superman as my hero (I still love going to the movies to see him). However, as my relationship with Jesus continues to grow and I learn more and more about what he did, is doing, and will do for me, I know that it is only Jesus Christ who fulfills the definition of a true hero. I looked up “hero” on Dictionary.com and this is what it said:

1. A man of distinguished courage or ability, admired for his brave deeds and noble qualities.
2. A person who, in the opinion of others, has heroic qualities or has performed a heroic act and is regarded as a model or ideal: e.g., He was a local hero when he saved the drowning child.
3. The principal male character in a story, play, film, etc.

When I first read that definition, I thought, “Wow, that really fits with what I know about Jesus.” So I thought I would explore this definition with you in the hope that we can connect more intimately with our Lord. First, let’s look at the phrase, “a man of distinguished courage.”

What did it take for Jesus to make the correct choice to follow the will of God when he came to a crossroad in his life in the Garden of Gethsemane? There he agonized about doing what he knew God needed him to do, and finally he said, “...Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Matt. 26:39b). I say it took courage! I pondered what it must have been like for him to know he was going to be handed over to the authorities to be tortured and crucified. After all, this was not the first time anyone was crucified, and surely Jesus was very aware of the agony he would have to endure.<sup>3</sup> Yet he made the freewill choice to obey God and go to the Cross for you and for me.<sup>4</sup> Now, *that’s* a hero!

Here is a definition of courage that we used at our “Men of Courage” conference a few years ago: **That quality of the mind that enables people to face difficulties or danger with firmness.** Some synonyms of courage are: bravery and valor. Back to the definition of hero, and the phrase, “admired for his brave deeds.” What did Jesus do that fits with that part of the hero definition?

I thought about the fact that he *always* did what was pleasing to God (John 8:29b). He healed the sick, spoke the truth in love, walked in compassion, was filled with mercy and grace, stood

up to the erroneous religious leaders, willingly laid down his life for us, and how about saving all of mankind—at least those who choose to believe?! (just to name a few heroic deeds).

How about the second definition of hero? “A person who, in the opinion of others, has heroic qualities or has performed a heroic act and is regarded as a model or ideal.”

The phrase, “opinion of others” got me thinking about what *God* thought about His Son. After all, it was God who promoted Jesus to be His right hand man after Jesus had accomplished his earthly mission in the plan of redemption.<sup>5</sup> Given that “...God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name” (Phil. 2:9), and that God made him “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36b), it is clear that God thinks *very highly* of His Son. Why? Because Jesus walked out the course set before him and thus retrieved God’s shattered dream of a perfect race of people living forever on a perfect earth. And in my opinion, what God thinks carries more weight than what anyone else thinks. I am sure you agree.

The last phrase I want to look at is from the third definition of hero: “the principal male character in a story, play, film...” How fitting it is that Jesus is the subject of the entire Bible from Genesis 3:15 onward.<sup>6</sup> He is God’s favorite subject! It was Jesus who carried out God’s plan of redemption, and it is Jesus who brought to fruition the “purpose of the ages.”<sup>7</sup> Without the accomplished work of Christ, we would all be “...without hope and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12). How miserable is that?! No hope...*and* in the world! Yuk!

Jesus bled and died for us as the Passover Lamb. He controlled his mind, disciplined his actions, and prioritized his life to do the will of God, his Father. Doing that day after day, positioned him to be able to obey God and go all the way to the Cross and through its torture. With that final selfless act of obedience, he changed human history forever. He broke the curse of what Adam had done in his one act of disobedience, and thus made possible the reconciliation of all Creation back to God (Rom. 5:12-15, 8:19-21). Because of Jesus, everything will be put back the way it should have been from the very beginning in the Garden of Eden. What a hero!

### **1 Corinthians 15:24-28**

(24) Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

(25) For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

(26) The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

(27) For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.

(28) When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

As we press forward in our individual journeys to become like Christ, may we also drive our minds as Jesus did to always do the will of our Father. As Christians, let us draw strength from Christ’s spirit in us and make a difference in this world. Let’s be someone’s hero and do the will of God in a dying world! May our lives honor the sacrifice of all that Jesus made available to us

in this day and hour. What a savior we have! What an example of how to walk and talk and be!  
What a hero Jesus is for all ages!

**Endnotes:**

1. Scripture quotations marked (Moffatt) are from The Bible: James Moffatt Translation, Copyright © 1922, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1935 Harper Collins San Francisco, Copyright © 1950, 1952, 1953, 1954 James A. R. Moffatt.
2. See our book One God & One Lord, Appendix A, Isaiah 9:6. You can read and download all of Appendix A (“Verses Commonly Used to Try and Support the Trinity”) online at our BiblicalUnitarian.com website.
3. Read the transcription of “The Last Week of Christ’s Life,” at TruthOrTradition.com under the topic of Jesus.
4. For further study on the subject of free will, visit TruthOrTradition.com, Topic: Foreknowledge of God.
5. Visit TruthOrTradition.com, Topic: Jesus Christ. “God’s Right Hand Man” for a powerful article on what this phase means.
6. See “The Golden Thread” posted on TruthOrTradition.com, Topic: Jesus Christ.
7. See our six-hour audio seminar “Jesus Christ: The Purpose of the Ages” (page 5 of the enclosed pricelist) or our 90 minute audio tape from May/Jun 97, “The Purpose of the Ages” (page 2 of the enclosed pricelist).

# The Vine

By John Lynn

“I heard it through the grapevine.” So goes the catch phrase people use. What we in Spirit & Truth Fellowship want people to hear is the wonderful Word of God, which, when understood and practiced, sets people free individually, and connects them in beneficial ways to their brethren in the Body of Christ. It is only within the Body of Christ, the Church, that each believer can exercise his own personal ministry or calling. Many Scripture verses, including the metaphor of the Church being a *body* designed to *grow*, point to how our interaction with one another as Christians is key to our individual and collective growth.

For example, 1 Corinthians 14:12-KJV exhorts us to seek to excel unto the edifying of the Church. The context shows that this is specifically referring to speaking in tongues with interpretation, and prophesying, in a gathering of Christians. These manifestations of holy spirit build up the body of believers present, and bring about growth in those who step out and utilize the precious gift within them. We are supernatural people, and we must regularly exercise our supernatural abilities in order to grow stronger in them. In what gathering of saints do you sharpen your spiritual skills and build up your brethren?

Well, if you live anywhere near Denver, Colorado, Portland, Oregon, or Scranton, Pennsylvania, we can point you to some sweet fellowship. John Lynn recently shared the Word with a good-sized group of Denver believers, who have been meeting regularly there for quite some time now. Robert and Monique Thayer have stepped up to take the lead in coordinating things, with plenty of assistance from others who are also invested in the success of their fellowship. For larger get-togethers, people have come from as far as Ft. Collins and Colorado Springs.

From Denver, John went to Portland for four days with the saints there. It was a wonderful time of people both making new friends (a number of people drove all the way from the Seattle area) and knitting their hearts together with those they already knew. With the Word of God as the centerpiece, and in particular how we can build an intimate relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, the believers enjoyed the Lord and one another, not only in evening fellowships, but also in skiing and hiking together during the days. Marc and Beverly DeLaBruere, Doug and Mary Thomas, and John and Laura Albus each hosted a gathering, and a blessed time was had by all.

OK, so you live near Scranton, Pennsylvania and can't get to Colorado or Oregon each week. Not to worry, Frank Rutkowski and a growing group of saints are getting together there on a regular basis, and they would love to hear from you, as would the folks in Denver or Portland. If you live in one those areas and are looking for some fellowship, please contact us at the Spirit & Truth Home Office (317.255.6189 or STFonline.org) and we will give you their contact information.

# Figure of Speech: Anadiplosis

## Repetition of Words

By John Schoenheit

God is the Author of language, and the ability to communicate with words is one thing that sets apart man from all other creatures. Figures of speech add emphasis and feeling to what we say and write. No one has ever used language as precisely as God does in His Word. When we recognize the figures of speech in the Bible, we are able to more fully enjoy the richness of the Word of God, and also learn much more truth from it. It is important that we become at least somewhat familiar with the figures of speech in Scripture, of which there are more than 200 varieties.<sup>1</sup>

The “Figure of the Month” in this issue of *The Sower* is *Anadiplosis*, which is the repetition of the same word or words at the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next, or at the end of one phrase and the beginning of the next. *Anadiplosis* is from the Greek prefix *ana*, again, and *diploun*, to double, or *diploous*, double, and it is the very first figure of speech used in the Bible.

### Genesis 1:1 and 2 (KJV)

(1) In the beginning God created the heaven **and the earth**.

(2) **And the earth** was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep....

Notice that Genesis 1:1 refers to both the heaven and the earth, but the second verse refers only to the earth. Thus there is a clear emphasis on the earth and God’s relation to it, which we see all throughout early Genesis.

When it comes to the Passover lamb, *Anadiplosis* places a special emphasis on the lamb, the “flock animal” that was to be slain. It is worth noting that although almost all versions of the Bible read “lamb” in verses 4 and 5 of Exodus 12, the Hebrew word *seh* does not mean “lamb,” but is the generic word for an animal from the flock, and can refer to a sheep or a goat.

### Exodus 12:4 and 5 (KJV)

(4) And if the household be too little for the lamb [lit. “a flock animal”], let him and his neighbor next unto his house take *it* according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for **the lamb** [**“the flock animal”**].

(5) **Your lamb** [**“a flock animal”**] shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats:

By repeating the “flock animal” at the end and beginning of the sentence, God places his emphasis on the importance of its part in the Passover. Furthermore, the figure of speech is even clearer in Hebrew than in English because the word “your” does not appear at the front of verse 5 in the Hebrew text, but occurs later in the verse. Unfortunately for Bible students, many modern versions lose the emphasis that the figure of speech brings to the text because they translate it right out of the Bible.

For example, look at the NIV:

**Exodus 12:4 and 5**

(4) If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of **lamb** needed in accordance with what each person will eat.

(5) The **animals** you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.

First and most obviously, there is no *Anadiplosis* in the NIV at all. The noun “flock animal,” has been moved from the end of verse 4 into the middle of the verse, where it is translated as “lamb.” Second, although the Hebrew word ending verse 4 and starting verse 5 is the same singular noun, the NIV translates it “lamb” in verse 4 and “animals” in verse 5.

Given that the *Anadiplosis* emphasizes the flock animal, the lamb, we must ask, “Why would God emphasize the animal in the first place?” The answer to that lies in the whole concept of the Passover and the importance of the shedding of blood. Think about it. God did not need to have the Israelites shed the blood of a Passover lamb to ensure their protection, as evidenced by the fact that in 10 plagues upon Egypt, the fourth was swarms of flies, but God protected the Israelites from the flies such that there were no flies where the Israelites lived (Exod. 8:22). The fifth plague was the death of Egyptian livestock, but no Israelite livestock died (Exod. 9:4-7). The seventh plague was hail, but no hail fell where the Israelites lived (Exod. 9:26). The ninth was darkness over the land of Egypt for three days, but there was light where the Israelites lived (Exod. 10:23).

So after protecting the Israelites from the brunt of the plagues without them having to do anything for their own protection, why does God have them kill a flock animal, a lamb or a goat, in order to be protected from the last plague? The answer is that the death of the lamb or goat, and the putting blood on the doorposts, points to the life and death of Jesus, who is called “our Passover” in 1 Corinthians 5:7.

There are quite a few examples of *Anadiplosis* in the Bible, including one in Genesis 7 that emphasized the importance of the water in Noah’s flood.

**Genesis 7:18 and 19 (ESV)**

(18) The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of **the waters**.

(19) **And the waters** prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered.

Psalms has a beautiful *Anadiplosis* that emphasizes how we should praise God:

**Psalms 98:4 and 5 (ESV)**

(4) Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and **sing praises!**

(5) **Sing praises** to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody!

Another *Anadiplosis* in Psalms emphasizes that God is to be our help.

**Psalm 121:1 and 2 (KJV)**

(1) A Song of degrees. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh **my help**.

(2) **My help** *cometh* from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.

This verse demonstrates why some figures of speech are hard to translate, and why studying multiple versions of the Bible is helpful. Most modern versions translate verse one with an ending that is easy to read in English, such as “where does my help come from?” Sadly, however, that makes it impossible to reproduce the *Anadiplosis*.

To reproduce the *Anadiplosis*, a modern English version would have to read, “from where comes my help?” Although possible, this makes the verse hard to read. *Anadiplosis*, and many other figures of speech that are hard to translate, demonstrate the need for good study Bibles that have important biblical information in a format that is easily accessed by the reader without making the biblical text itself difficult to read.

Bullinger has many examples of *Anadiplosis*, and the diligent Bible student will enjoy examining them and looking for the emphasis in each context.

**Endnotes:**

1. E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, reprinted 1968).