

Fallen Into the Hands of a Loving Father

The Pesakh and its Pictures

Chapter 4

In chapter one, “Throwing Your God a Goddie Biscuit,” we discussed the misconceptions concerning the sin sacrifice showing that it was not an appeasement of an angry god. We tied the sin sacrifice with the renewing of a covenant showing that when we break a covenant, there must be blood shed in order to reinstate it. In chapter two, “Bask in His Glory,” we discussed the voluntary offering, an offering not required, but with great benefits when understood from the ancient Israelite’s perspective. In addition to these previously mentioned sacrifices there were the festival sacrifices, like the *Pesakh*¹ lamb or the barley and wheat loaves during the Feast of Weeks, the two goats at Yom Kippor, (Day of Atonement) and the sacrifices for the nations at Sukkot, as well as various other ritual sacrifices on each of the festivals and Sabbaths. These show us a picture of the work of God on earth. Studying these sacrifices will reveal the plan of God and even forecast events and works that God intends to do upon this earth in His redemptive plan for mankind. In these we find the work of Messiah, both what He has done and what He will do. In studying these we will come to understand a greater degree of God’s mercy, grace, and loving kindness, all encompassed in the same Hebrew word *chesed* and used numerous times in the *Tanakh*, (Old Testament). After removing the false image of God as seen in pagan deities, it will enable us to better understand the true nature of His work and the mission of Messiah on earth as shown in the festivals and sacrifices that accompany them.

The Pesakh Lamb:

The *Pesakh* Lamb is a special festival offering but it seems to be a forerunner of the *bikorim*² sacrifice later instituted in the wilderness. There is no direct association in Scripture defining this relationship, but by reference alone one can see a connection. First we must look at the purpose of the *Pesakh* lamb and consider the claim made concerning it.

¹ The Hebrew word *pesakh* actually means lamb. The translators have attempted to convey that the noun meaning lamb and the verb designating what a lamb does~skip are from exactly the same root. Hence the *pesakh* (lamb) causes God to *pasakh* (skip over) the children of Israel. In English the lamb was called a Passover lamb because God passed over the children of Israel. I will usually follow the term *pesakh* with lamb using it like we do in English~Passover lamb, but in reality the word *pesakh* means lamb and I am using the same word in two different languages.

² The *bikerim* offering is a firstborn male that opens the womb. It was the Lord’s and therefore was offered to the Lord as a sacrifice. It was unlawful to offer any unclean animal, so donkeys, camels, horses, etc. would not be a suitable sacrifice. Either their necks were broken, or they were redeemed. There would be a substitution price established for their redemption. Likewise a firstborn son was not suitable for a Sacrifice. God considers human sacrifice an abomination. So the firstborn son was also redeemed.

^{NKJV} **Exodus 12:** ³ "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth *day* of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. ... Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. ⁷ 'And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. ⁸ 'Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it.... ¹² 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: *I am* the LORD. ¹³ 'Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.

The lamb's blood was a sign to the Lord and He passed over every household with this sign. Everyone in Egypt had the same sentence, but those who obeyed our Father by offering a lamb according to the prescribed manner were allowed to keep their firstborn male child. A lamb would purchase back or redeem their firstborn sons. In the following chapter God explains through Moses something He wishes to establish as a practice for all Israel. It is one of the very earliest edicts of the Law, established prior to Mount Sinai.

^{NKJV} **Exodus 13:2** "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and beast; it is Mine."

God tells Israel that all firstborn are His. Possibly this has been so since creation, but clearly this verse informs Israel that God requires all firstborn males to be devoted to Him. He later gives details which include that all clean animals must be sacrificed, all unclean animals must be killed or redeemed by a lamb. Sons, however, must not be killed, but be redeemed. The concept of redemption involves being bought back. A son belongs to the parents, but since he is a firstborn son, he must be given to the Lord. Hence, when we are required to substitute a sacrifice, we are redeeming, or buying back our son. The reason is clearly given for this practice in verses 14 and 15 of chapter 13.

^{NKJV} **Exodus 13:13** "But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem *it*, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. ¹⁴ "So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *is* this?' that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ¹⁵ 'And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.'

Here the purpose of the *bikkurim* sacrifice³ and the redemption of the firstborn son is clearly tied to the Passover offering. The *Pesakh* lamb was a redemption of the firstborn sons of Israel while they were in Egypt, so a memorial sacrifice was established concerning all firstborn. This was in addition to all the commemorative edicts that were given concerning the feast of Passover. Israel was not only required to annually offer a *Pesakh* lamb, but whenever a male was a first born of anything, this event was to be commemorated. So I conclude that the *Pesakh* lamb was a redemption of the firstborn, or a *bikkurim* offering.

All of these connections are important to understand a prophetic significance to the *Pesakh* lamb. However there is one additional piece of information that may put some extra pieces of the puzzle together. God makes one very unusual statement to Moses when giving instructions concerning what he is to say to Pharaoh. These words reveal a lot concerning God's plan with mankind.

^{NKJV} **Exodus 4:22** "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel *is* My son, My firstborn. ²³ "So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.'"

Moses is to tell Pharaoh that he is to free Israel, God's firstborn, and is given the threat that if Pharaoh does not, God will require his firstborn. It seems like God is offering an exchange, Pharaoh's and all of Egypt's firstborn sons, for His firstborn, Israel. We can easily miss the statement here concerning Israel being God's firstborn. Israel is not God's only child, rather he is God's firstborn son. God chose the nation of Israel, being birthed at this time for a special, maybe even "devoted" purpose. Israel was to bring the message of God to the nations, who also were God's children. All of mankind were created by God and were His children. He loves them all and has their well being in mind. He established law and order, first with Israel as a means to correct the chaotic mess into which the earth had fallen. This chaos was destroying God's creation and the chaos was defined as sin.

Sin is transgression of the law as stated in 1 John 3;4. Sin as in an innately evil act, was not as much on God's mind as the consequences brought about by participating in innately evil acts. This sin was destroying God's creation, so Israel was being called out of all nations as a firstborn son to lead the rest of His children back to the proper life as established by God.⁴ However, there was not only one side to this mission. If Israel acted properly, they were to lead all nations to follow their

³ *Bikkurim* is the Hebrew word meaning firstborn or one who opens the womb. This term has been adopted to also designate the sacrifice that was required, either the firstborn itself, or the sacrifice of the one that redeemed the firstborn whether an unclean animal or the firstborn son.

⁴ ^{NKJV} **Deuteronomy 4:5** "Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to *them* in the land which you go to possess. ⁶ "Therefore be careful to observe *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.' ⁷ "For what great nation *is there* that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God *is* to us, for whatever *reason* we may call upon Him? ⁸ "And what great nation *is there* that has *such* statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?"

proper behavior, yet if they acted improperly God would so punish them that the nations would fear to follow their improper actions.⁵ Hence look to the firstborn son and see if you wish to follow his actions. Without regard to his behavior, Israel will reveal the will and mind of God.

Anyone who reads the curses promised for Israel if they disregarded the loving instructions of their Father as laid out in Deuteronomy chapters 28-30 will recognize them as not only foreboding, but prophetic. After Israel had been in the promised land for many years they split into two kingdoms and each acted according to its fallen nature. The Northern Kingdom nicknamed Ephraim after its royal line took the name Israel. There was not one righteous king that ever ruled over the Kingdom of Israel so in circa 721 BCE the northern kingdom of Israel was brought to an end by Shalamezer the Assyrian. The Israelites acted like pagans following after the pagan gods, they rejected their loving father and were outcast into the lands that behaved in much the same way. They so assimilated into these nations that no-one could distinguish a captured Israelite from an Assyrian pagan. They soon forgot that they ever had a loving Heavenly Father and lost contact with their heritage. So the northern kingdom disseminated throughout the world unaware of from whom they had descended or what wonderful heritage they possessed.

Judah the Southern Kingdom, on the other hand did not, to the extreme, follow the actions of Israel. It had several righteous kings who continually tried to restore the people to their God. They went through times of wickedness which brought about punishment and then revival and repentance which brought about restoration to God. They also were sent into captivity under Babylon, but returned to the land of Israel and rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple. They continued waffling somewhat but usually a leader arose who brought them back to righteousness. While today we have no absolute assurances as to who the Northern Kingdom is, we have a living community in most nations representing the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

The dichotomy between the two firstborn sons of God can be clearly seen in the first chapter of Hosea. Most of this passage is to the wayward firstborn Israel, but there is a postscript showing God's appreciation to Judah. It ends with a strong proclamation of the mercy of our Heavenly Father. I will give a slightly shortened version below to illuminate the complete plan

^{NKJV} Hosea 1:4 And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little *while*, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel. ⁵ And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. ⁶ And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And *God* said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away. ⁷ But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen. ⁸ Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. ⁹ Then said *God*, Call his name Loammi: for ye *are* not my

⁵ ^{NKJV} **Deuteronomy 28:15** "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:...

people, and I will not be your *God*.¹⁰ Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, *Ye are* not my people, *there* it shall be said unto them, *Ye are* the sons of the living God.¹¹ Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great *shall be* the day of Jezreel.

In these verses the entire story of Israel is given. The kingdom is split in these verses and the Northern Kingdom of Israel is brought to an end. The word *jezreel* is not defined in these verses. Its root *zarah*, is the Hebrew word meaning seed. *Zarah* becomes a verb by changing the vowels slightly making it *zarah*, meaning to sow seed. With the prefix *yod* in front of *zarah* we get the 3rd person imperfect masculine singular pronoun meaning he. Dissecting this word further we find *el* at the end means God. All together it would read “he will be sown of God.” Since most sowing during this time was done by broadcasting seed, the verb form *zarah* not only meant to sow, but also to scatter. Hence the Hebrew word here *jezreel* can also mean “he will be scattered of God.”

To make this Hebrew word picture even more graphic we can explore another variation of *zarah* that gives us another noun. By adding an infix *vav* we get the instrument by which the seed is scattered, *zeroah* meaning arm. That brings us to one name of God, “*Zeroah YHWH*” often translated, “the arm of the LORD.” So it seems that the arm of the LORD chose to scatter Israel, to plant him in the earth, so that he might bear fruit many times his original number. Hosea reports, “Yet the number of the Children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea...” Yes, after Hosea speaks all of this doom and gloom upon Israel he explains that God will keep His part of the bargain in that he will still fulfill His promise to Abraham and keep the covenant that He promised centuries before. Even after God spoke through Hosea, that he would have no mercy upon Israel meaning he will give them what they deserve, He shows that by Him keeping His covenant with Abraham, He will extend mercy upon Israel again while they are still in the places where He scattered them.

Let us review one last aspect of *zera*. As the arm is used to scatter the seed, so is the arm used to gather the produce. The action is almost the same motion, but in the opposite direction. While a right arm will travel from left to right, palm cupped upward to scatter or sow seed, it reverses the direction with the palm cupped inward to gather in the harvest. Though there is no Hebrew word derived from this root to specifically mean harvest, it seems every aspect of agriculture is included in this word. Theological Workbook of the Old Testament states it this way, “Thus, the whole agricultural cycle is practically summed up in the word *zera*; from the act of sowing to the seed planted, to the harvest taken.” So while God is stating that He is scattering Israel into the nations, He also is planting them to do a work for Him. Furthermore He intends to gather in a harvest from that planting and in doing so Israel will have multiplied many fold.

This may seem as though we have diverged greatly from our topic of the Pesakh lamb. Yet let me enumerate what we have covered so far and then try to bring it all together in one picture.

1. The *Pesakh* lamb was to redeem the firstborn sons of Israel because God was going to call in all His firstborn in Egypt and those who did not have the sign of the blood meaning a lamb

- had been offered were going to die.
2. The same lamb could have protected an Egyptian if he wished to obey God with this sign.
 3. The *bikkurim* sacrifice was a commemoration of the original Passover Lamb sacrifice only rather than being done yearly, it was done only upon the birth of a firstborn that was a male.
 4. God referred to Israel as His firstborn.
 5. God used the nation of Israel to be the firstborn among the nations to whom He gave the law, a corrective revelation in order to bring His creation back from the curse.
 6. The nation of Israel split into two nations revealing both aspects, obedience and disobedience to God's law.
 7. The northern kingdom, Israel was sent into captivity and ultimately disappeared due to its disobedience.
 8. The southern kingdom, Judah was never fully eradicated because it had remained more faithful to God
 9. God promised mercy to the northern kingdom even though it did not deserve it, because He intends to keep His covenant with Abraham.

Paul in the Letter to the Corinthians referred to Yehoshua as our Passover ~ *Pesakh*.⁶ A close review of the crucifixion story reveals that Yehoshua died during the time that the Passover lamb was slain in the temple and was required to be buried quickly so that he would not remain unburied on the high Sabbath of Passover. Most of the story about Yehoshua's actions that week were related to the Passover lamb, beginning with the triumphal entry four days prior to Passover all the way to His execution, dying precisely when the *Pesakh* was slain. So His actions closely immolated the Passover lamb and it is no wonder that Paul referred to Him as the Passover Lamb.

It is time to consider what the Passover Lamb would do. First it was a redemption of the firstborn. Who was God's firstborn? So the primary work of Yehoshua as the Passover Lamb was to redeem~ buy back, God's firstborn, Israel, out of the nations. Israel had been lost into all the nations captive to the idolatrous ways of those nations. This was just like Israel had originally been enslaved by Egypt at the first Passover. The plagues of the first Passover addressed each god that Egypt worshiped. In the first Passover the lamb redeemed the firstborn son, repurchasing them from God when He went to collect those firstborn that were His. The act was so traumatic to the Egyptians, because they did not redeem their firstborn sons, that they relinquished ownership of the Israelites, making them a free nation under the rule of God. So Yehoshua, as the Passover Lamb was sent to redeem those of Israel who had been lost in the nations. To bring them back to the one God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Israel had been driven into idolatrous nations because they looked like the idolatrous nations while they were living in the land of promise. So it should be of no surprise that Christianity spread quickly into many idolatrous nations and gained many adherents from those nations. Could the converts from the nations have been lost Israelites with whom God intended to keep His covenant? There may be no proof, but we are speaking of a God who keeps covenant without regard to the actions of those with whom He keeps it.

⁶ NKVJ **1 Corinthians 5:7** "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."

Christianity claims to be a part of the New Covenant, a curiosity, since the New Covenant is clearly made with only two groups of people, the house of Israel, and the house of Judah. I agree that the church is a part of the New Covenant⁷ and is being called back out of the pagan nations by the actions done by Yehoshua (Jesus) our Passover lamb. One could twist this statement to mean that I am proposing a genealogical requirement for salvation. This is silly. I am not requiring all Christians to be descendants of Abraham, however I am showing how God is literally keeping His covenant with Israel by returning them from the nations as He promised. If millions of people join Israel in the process, what is that to me. I am only concerned that our doctrine reflects the true nature of God to keep His covenant. It is noted in the first exodus that Israel came out a mixed multitude.⁸ “Mixed multitude” has historically been taken to mean that many Egyptians came out with them agreeing that the God of Israel was the one true God. However, in the wilderness that mixed multitude caused considerable trouble,⁹ possibly because they had no knowledge about following the one true God and as a practice they had been following pagan gods.

When we examine the type presented in the *Pesakh* lamb we find that its purpose was to redeem Israel from its captivity to Egypt and bring them back to the land of their fathers to worship the one true God and to be ruled by Him only. This redemption was to free them from the slavery of foreign dominion; to free them from service to multiple gods, and to return them to the land promised to Abraham Isaac and Jacob so that they could live in that land and execute justice in that land. They were to lead the nations into righteousness by being a living example and showing righteous judgment. Each of these types have a clear counterpart in the work of Messiah.

Messiah redeems His people from the slavery of idolatry. Wherever Christianity has gone, it has liberated the inhabitants of the land from idolatry. It has traveled into all the nations of the world to do so. Israel, the northern kingdom, was scattered into all the nations of the world for its idolatry. Hence the Messiah’s disciples went into all the world looking for those “lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Just as in ancient times, all those who put the blood on the doorpost came out of Egypt as the newly freed nation of Israel without regard to personal heritage; anyone claiming the

⁷ New Covenant would better be translated as Renewed Covenant. The terms in both Greek and Hebrew are used to describe something that has been refreshed rather than something that has never been before. The Greek word *kainos* is new in respects to freshness not age, where as the Hebrew word *khadasha* is a renewing like the moon who goes completely through one cycle and starts over again. It is not a completely different moon, only a renewed one.

⁸ Exodus 12:38 A mixed multitude went up with them also,...

⁹ NKJ **Numbers 11:4** Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat?"

blood of Messiah will be purchased out of the nations and be a part of the nation of Israel.¹⁰ Once Messiah has called all out of the nations that He intends, He will return for them and set up a kingdom on this earth ruling the nations with righteous judgment. Those who have been called out of the nations will also rule and reign with Him. So, as the Passover Lamb, Yehoshua is returning the nation of Israel to the land of promise as was foretold in the prophets. In truth, Yehoshua has redeemed and is redeeming Israel, God's firstborn.

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¹⁰ NKJ **Ephesians 2:12** that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ... ..¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,