

DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH BY THE
TRUE PASSOVER LAMB: A SIGNIFICANT ASPECT
OF THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PASSOVER
IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

PAUL M. HOSKINS*

While the presence of the Passover in the Gospel of John is beyond dispute, interpreters vary quite a bit as to what significance it has for the Gospel's theology. Thomas Knöppler and Rainer Metzner are among those who provide evidence that the Passover lamb contributes to the Gospel's portrayal of Jesus as an atoning sacrifice. They look to the OT and extra-biblical Jewish works in order to see whether the Gospel of John is unique in seeing the Passover sacrifice in terms of atonement. In light of their investigations, John is probably not unique in this respect.¹ Yet, if atonement alone were John's focus, the Passover lamb would pale in comparison to other OT sacrifices whose relationship to atonement is more evident. So, then, what accounts for John's apparent references to the Passover lamb as a type for the sacrificial death of Jesus? The Passover lamb's associations with deliverance from death due to a plague from God may contribute something to John's interest in it. As Ulrich Wilckens points out, the blood of the true Passover lamb, Jesus, saves people from eternal death due to sin rather than providing temporary protection from death on the night of the Passover.² Wilckens's observation points to the potential fruitfulness of examining the Gospel of John for evidence that it contains a Passover typology that is just as concerned with deliverance from death as it is with atonement for sin. This article undertakes such an examination in order to show that deliverance from death and sin is a significant element of the Passover typology of the Gospel of John.

* Paul M. Hoskins is assistant professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 22567, Fort Worth, TX 76122.

¹ Thomas Knöppler, *Sühne im Neuen Testament: Studien zum urchristlichen Verständnis der Heilsbedeutung des Todes Jesu* (WMANT 88; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2001) 26–29, 233–52; Rainer Metzner, *Das Verständnis der Sünde im Johannesevangelium* (WUNT 122; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2000) 129–30, 143–56. Cf. Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (3d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 131–32.

² Ulrich Wilckens, "Christus traditus, se ipsum tradens: Zum johanneischen Verständnis des Kreuzestodes Jesu," in *Gemeinschaft am Evangelium: Festschrift für Wiard Popkes zum 60. Geburtstag* (ed. E. Brandt et al.; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1996) 363. Origen and Cyril of Alexandria make similar points (see Cyril's commentary on John at 6:53 and Origen, *Pasch.* 14). Also, Leonhard Goppelt sees a relationship between the Passover lamb and the Lamb of God of John 1:29, because he "delivers from death and destruction by the atoning power of his death" (*Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982] 190).

I. THE TRUE PASSOVER LAMB WHO DELIVERS FROM SIN
ACCORDING TO JOHN 1:29

John 1:29 and 19:36 are the two most commonly cited verses in relation to John's Passover theme.³ John 1:29 has puzzled interpreters due to its unique combination of "lamb of God" and taking away the sin of the world.⁴ If part of the background for the Lamb of God here is the Passover lamb, does that fit with the notion of taking away sin? Does another OT background need to come alongside, like Isaiah 53, and justify some or all of the lamb's ability to take away sin? A detailed examination of these questions has been undertaken by others. Rather than entering into a debate that focuses narrowly on 1:29, a brief case will be made for a Passover lamb contribution to the background of John 1:29, even with respect to taking away sin. This will prepare the way for examining 1:29 in relation to John's teaching on sin and death in the next section.

Although 1:29 is probably the beginning of John's Passover theme, it does not occur in a Passover context.⁵ It is John the Baptist who says here, "Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." As with 7:38, interpreters have struggled to narrow down the most likely OT background for this verse. Within the context of the Gospel of John, the two most important candidates are probably the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 and the Passover lamb.⁶ Isaiah 53 provides a significant analogy because it is an instance of a person who is offered as a "guilt offering" rather than a sacrificial animal (53:10).⁷ Isaiah 53:1 is quoted in John 12:38. It appears likely that Isaiah 53 makes some contribution to the OT background for John 1:29.⁸ Yet the Pass-

³ Passover is mentioned in John 2:13, 23; 6:4; 11:55; 12:1; 13:1; 18:28, 39; 19:14. Ἐορτή ("feast") is used in reference to the Passover in 2:23; 4:45; 6:4; 11:56; 12:12, 20; 13:1, 29.

⁴ For recent discussion and sources on 1:29 see Metzner, *Sünde im Johannevangelium* 115–58; Christopher W. Skinner, "Another Look at 'the Lamb of God,'" *BSac* 161 (2004) 89–104.

⁵ See 4:10–14 where living water is introduced in advance of further explanation and connection to the Feast of Tabernacles (7:37–39).

⁶ For helpful argumentation on this point see Jörg Frey, "Die 'theologia crucifixi' des Johannevangeliums" in *Kreuzestheologie im Neuen Testament* (ed. A. Dettwiler and J. Zumstein, WUNT 151; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002) 209–12. The phrase "of God" may also show some influence from Gen 22:8, 13 where God provides the lamb/ram for the offering in the place of Isaac. Discussion of 1:29 is often complicated by trying to assess how John the Baptist might have understood these words. Since John the Baptist could be speaking prophetically here, it would be unwise to limit one's interpretation of the significance of 1:29 to what he could have understood (see 11:49–52; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991] 150).

⁷ Sacrificial language is also applied to the death of martyrs in 2 Macc 12:45 and 4 Macc 17:22 (I. Howard Marshall, "The Development of the Concept of Redemption in the New Testament," in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L. L. Morris on His 60th Birthday* [ed. Robert Banks; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975] 160, 163).

⁸ In Isa 53:10, the suffering servant is presented as a "guilt offering" (חטאת) that has to do with atonement (see *HALOT*, s.v. חטאת; Lev 6:5–6). The main issue with connecting John 1:29 too closely with Isaiah 53 is that a lamb is used there only as a minor point of comparison (Isa 53:7). Other terms would have made a more clear reference to the servant of Isaiah 53, but it would be hard to rule out some contribution of Isaiah 53 here (Frey, "Die 'theologia crucifixi' des Johannevangeliums" 211–12).

over lamb connections for 1:29 are promising as well. The Passover animal is limited to a lamb or a young goat (Exod 12:5).⁹ Passover is a visible and repeated element of the Gospel of John and rules for the Passover sacrifice come to the forefront in relation to Jesus in 19:36.¹⁰

The central puzzling element in 1:29 with respect to Passover is that the Passover lamb does not appear to have anything to do with taking away sin, while the suffering servant appears to, since he is likened to a guilt offering and bears the sin (or guilt) of many (Isa 53:10–12). The problem may not be as serious as some interpreters think. The teaching on sin elsewhere in the Johannine writings clearly associates the blood of Jesus with atonement and cleansing from sin.¹¹ Josephus provides evidence that the blood of the Passover lamb could be thought of as sacrificial blood that cleansed the houses of God's people.¹² Some conclude from this and other evidence that the Passover lamb was perceived by some first-century Jews, like John and Josephus, to be an atoning sacrifice.¹³

Old Testament support for such a belief comes to light if one regards the Passover sacrifice (Exod 12:27) as a prototypical sacrifice.¹⁴ Then, sacrifices instituted later help somewhat in the interpretation of the character of the

⁹ According to Leon Morris (*Apostolic Preaching* 142–43), the common usage of ἀμνός in the LXX is with reference to designating the appropriate animal for certain sacrifices (85 of 96 instances) (see Lev 1:10, a use specifically tied to atonement [v. 4]). It is used in Exod 12:5 in manuscript A; other manuscripts use the related, less common term, ἄρνός. Exodus 12:5 also refers to the proper animal as a one-year-old πρόβατον (“sheep”; a word used elsewhere in Exod 12 as well). John's use of ἀμνός over πρόβατον alludes more specifically to a young animal often used in sacrifices (cf. Lev 1:10 vs. 5:15–18). Also, note that ἄρνός (genitive case ending) does not normally occur in the nominative case where ἀμνός is used instead as in John 1:29.

¹⁰ Frey, “Die ‘theologia crucifixi’ des Johannesevangeliums” 209.

¹¹ Metzner, *Sünde im Johannesevangelium* 154–55. He cites 1 John 1:7, 9; 2:2; 3:5; 4:10. One could add Rev 7:14.

¹² Josephus *Ant.* 2.312 (cf. Ezek 45:18–20). See Metzner, *Sünde im Johannesevangelium* 130; Tamara Prosic, *The Development and Symbolism of Passover until 70 CE* (JSOTSup 414; London: T & T Clark, 2004) 49–50; William Propp, *Exodus 1–18* (AB 2; New York: Doubleday, 1999) 437. Propp points to the relevance of the similar rite in Ezek 45:18–20 where cleansing and atonement for the house/Temple is explicit (see esp. the application of blood to the doorposts of the “house” in v. 19). Josephus refers to the Passover lamb as a sacrifice in *Ant.* 2.311–13, 3.248, 9.271; *J.W.* 6.423–6 (Knöppler, *Sühne im Neuen Testament* 28). On the connection between cleansing and atonement, see N. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering in the Priestly Literature: Its Meaning and Function* (JSOTSup 56; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987) 94–99, esp. 99.

¹³ Knöppler, *Sühne im Neuen Testament* 26–29; Metzner, *Sünde im Johannesevangelium* 129–30; Morris, *Apostolic Preaching* 131–32. For arguments questioning this assessment, including the Josephus quote, see Jesper Nielsen, “The Lamb of God: The Cognitive Structure of a Johannine Metaphor” in *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language* (ed. J. Frey et al.; WUNT 200; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 233–39. Nielsen relies primarily upon Christine Schlund's work, “Kein Knochen soll gebrochen werden”: *Studien zu Bedeutung und Funktion des Pesachfests in Texten des frühen Judentums und im Johannesevangelium* (WMANT 107; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2005). Schlund strongly denies that the Passover has a clear connection with atonement for sin in either the OT or Jewish literature (“Kein Knochen soll gebrochen werden” 54–55, 112–14).

¹⁴ Propp, *Exodus 1–18* 451; C. F. Keil, *The Pentateuch* (Commentary on the Old Testament 1; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006) 332–33 (on Exod 12:14). Notice the occurrence of “Passover sacrifice” in Exod 12:27 (cf. Exod 23:18, 34:25).

Passover sacrifice.¹⁵ The original Passover sacrifice consecrates or sanctifies the firstborn sons and animals so that they now belong to God (Num 3:13).¹⁶ Similarly, the ordination ram used in the sanctification of the priests, part of which they eat, is associated with making atonement for them (Exod 29:33).¹⁷ Hyssop appears elsewhere with respect to blood rites that cleanse from impurity and sin.¹⁸ In general, sacrifices, including peace offerings that resemble the Passover sacrifice, contribute to atonement even if some are more closely associated with it than others.¹⁹ The yearly sacrifice of the Passover in the Temple gives it a place in the sacrificial system, where atonement is a central concern and may suggest something about the original Passover (Deut 16:2).²⁰ Finally, the Passover sacrifice spared the firstborn from a plague sent from God (Exod 12:12–13). Deliverance from a plague sent from God is elsewhere associated with making atonement.²¹ In light of this evidence, one can see why at least some Jews, like John and Josephus, could regard the Passover lamb as significant for atonement.

Even if the Passover lamb can be viewed as an atoning sacrifice, John complicates the issue of an OT background for his ἀμνός τοῦ θεοῦ (“lamb of God”) due to his use of the phrase ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν (“who takes away the sin”). The verb αἴρω is especially challenging, since it is rarely used in the LXX in connection with sin.²² This is true even when one widens the search to include prefixed forms and the related verb ἀφαιρέω.²³ The instances that exist suggest that God is normally the only one who is regarded as able

¹⁵ Cf. J. B. Segal, *The Hebrew Passover from the Earliest Times to A.D. 70* (London Oriental Series 12; London: Oxford University Press, 1963) 161–62.

¹⁶ Num 8:17; Exod 13:1–16; Propp, *Exodus 1–18* 454, 457; Keil, *Pentateuch* 341 (on Exod 13:2).

¹⁷ Cf. Lev 8:34. Kiuchi, *Purification Offering* 99; Richard Averbeck, “חֶלֶב,” *NIDOTTE* 4:140; Keil, *Pentateuch* 549. Also note the unleavened bread (Exod 29:2), the ram must be eaten by morning (29:34), the prohibition from leaving the tent (Lev 8:33), and the similarities to peace offerings (29:28). Cf. Exod 12:8, 10, 22, 46; Segal, *Passover* 171–72. Kiuchi sees a close relationship between making atonement and sanctification in Lev 8:15, 16:18–19 (*Purification Offering* 96–98).

¹⁸ Segal, *Passover* 158–59; compare Exod 12:22 with Lev 14:6–7, Numbers 19 (esp. vv. 6, 18), Ps 51:7. In Heb 9:19–22, the blood of the covenant (Exodus 24) is sprinkled on the people with hyssop and is associated with cleansing them (9:22). Kiuchi sees a close relationship between making atonement and purification in Lev 16:18–19, 30 and Ezek 43:20 (*Purification Offering* 96–98).

¹⁹ Kiuchi, *Purification Offering* 99, 101–9; for examples, see Lev 17:11; Exod 29:28, 33; Ezek 45:17. On the similarities between the Passover sacrifice and peace offerings, see Lev 7:11–15 and Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 219–20.

²⁰ Cf. Propp, *Exodus 1–18* 446–47. Atonement is mentioned in connection with the sin offering for each day of the feast that follows the Passover (Num 28:22). Atonement as an aspect of festival offerings is highlighted in Ezek 45:17. The Passover in Ezekiel begins with a sin offering for the prince and the people (45:22). For the use of sheep in sacrifices involving atonement, see Lev 1:4, 10; 4:32, 35; 5:6, 15–18; 6:6–7; 14:10; Num 6:14.

²¹ Exod 30:11–16; Num 16:41–50, 25:7–13; see also n. 45.

²² In the LXX, αἴρω is twice found with “sin” in the sense of forgiveness of sin (1 Sam 15:25, 25:28; I. H. Marshall, “Lamb of God,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* [ed. J. Green et al.; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992] 433). The second case does not involve sin against God, but sin against a person (David). On the first case, see below.

²³ One finds ἐξάιρω in Exod 28:38 and Mic 7:18 (see also its use in Hos 10:8 and Deut 19:19). In Exod 28:38 (LXX), Aaron as priest removes sin from consecrated objects (see Lev 10:17).

to “take away” a person’s sins or guilt.²⁴ Similarly, in Heb 10:4, 11, one finds ἀφαιρέω and περιαιρέω used with respect to animal sacrifices and their inability to “take away sins.” Only Jesus is able “to put away sin through the sacrifice of himself” (Heb 9:28).²⁵ In light of these points, it is possible that John has chosen αἴρω in order to distinguish this Lamb of God from OT parallels. As the fulfillment of the OT type, this sacrificial lamb is greater than the Passover lamb that anticipated it. Unlike the Passover lamb and other OT sacrifices, Jesus, the true Passover lamb, is truly able to take away the sins of the world.²⁶ Similarly, as the true bread from heaven, Jesus surpasses the manna with respect to its ability to sustain life (6:32, 48–51).²⁷

II. THE TRUE PASSOVER LAMB AND THE NEED FOR DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH DUE TO SIN

On the night of the first Passover, death visited the homes of those who did not demonstrate that they belonged to the people of God by obeying God’s instructions regarding the Passover sacrifice. If Jesus is the true Passover lamb and John has a significant interest in Passover typology, then one might look for Jesus to deliver from a plague from God, namely, death. This section examines the Gospel of John’s picture of the threat posed by death and shows its relation to Passover typology, especially the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (1:29).

After 1:29, the noun “sin” (ἁμαρτία) next occurs in 8:21, 24.²⁸ The relationship between these verses is deeper than one common word. Like 1:29,

²⁴ See 1 Sam 15:25 and Mic 7:18. In 1 Sam 15:25, Saul asks Samuel to forgive his sin against the Lord (ἀρον δὴ τὸ ἁμάρτημά μου), but Samuel does not and Saul is rejected by the Lord for his disobedience. In Mic 7:18, God pardons a person’s sin. One finds ἀφαιρέω used for God pardoning sin in Exod 34:7, Num 14:18, Isa 27:9, Sir 47:11 and περιαιρέω in 1 Chr 21:8. Lev 10:17 appears to be the only place in the LXX where the priests “take away” (ἀφαιρέω) sins of the people through sacrifices. Except in Isa 27:9, these Greek verbs are used to translate the verb נָשָׂא. When a person is the subject, נָשָׂא plus יָע (“iniquity”) is normally translated with a form of λαμβάνω plus a Greek word for sin. Thus, the LXX ordinarily reserves αἴρω and related verbs for situations in which God is the subject of נָשָׂא plus יָע (in a few places, one finds ἀφίημι instead). Similarly, according to Milgrom, this Hebrew expression means “remove iniquity” when God is the subject, otherwise it normally means “bear responsibility/punishment” (*Leviticus 1–16* 622–23). In Isa 53:11–12, נָשָׂא is translated with ἀναφέρω (see the NT allusions in Heb 9:28, 1 Pet 2:24). On this discussion, see the more complete data in J. Terence Forestell, *The Word of the Cross* (AnBib 57; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1974) 160–61. Similar points are also made by Martin Hasitschka in *Befreiung von Sünde nach dem Johannesevangelium: Eine bibeltheologische Untersuchung* (Innsbrucker theologische Studien 27; Innsbruck: Tyrolia Verlag, 1989) 110–24.

²⁵ Cf. Heb 10:12.

²⁶ Cf. 1 John 3:5–6; John Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 17 (on John 1:29), 46 (on John 6:52). See John’s use of αἴρω in 15:2.

²⁷ It is common in typological relationships for the antitype to be greater than the type. This is what one would expect, since the antitype as fulfillment is the goal to which the type pointed. For further definition and discussion of basic aspects of typology, see Paul Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2006) 18–27.

²⁸ The only other time “sin” occurs in this interval is an imperative in 5:14.

8:12–59 has several connections to the Exodus or Passover. The setting for 8:12–59 is, however, the Feast of Tabernacles, which is one of the reasons interpreters have tended to neglect its Passover connections.²⁹ Beginning this section by calling himself “the light of the world” ties into the Feast of Tabernacles due to the lights present in the Temple during that Feast (8:12).³⁰ Yet a connection with the Passover is still possible, because the Feast of Tabernacles and Passover are closely related. Both look back on the progression of events that freed God’s people from Egypt and brought them back to the land promised to Abraham.³¹ John elsewhere connects the events celebrated by these feasts.³² The clearest Passover elements in 8:12–59 are found in 8:31–36 where one finds slavery to sin and a redeemer, the Son. In light of 8:31–36, the following passage, 8:37–47, likely presents slavery under the devil as a complicating aspect of their slavery to sin. Once these connections to the Exodus/Passover become apparent, it is possible to see Exodus allusions in “you will know that I am” (8:28) and “we have one Father, God” (8:41). This language is common in the OT, but goes back to language that becomes prominent in association with the exodus.³³

In light of these Exodus/Passover connections, the situation of the Jews in John 8:12–59 looks something like this. Jesus warns the Jews to whom he is speaking that he is going away (8:21), which means back to the Father (7:33). They cannot go with him (8:23). This is because they are “of this world” while he is “not of this world” (8:23). Even a group of Jews who believe in him are not yet true disciples. They are still in slavery to sin (8:30–36). This keeps them from having a permanent place in the Father’s house (8:35;

²⁹ Whether one includes or excludes 7:53–8:11 due to one’s text-critical judgments, Jesus’ teaching in 8:12–59 is set at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. If 7:53–8:11 is excluded, then its connection with the Feast of Tabernacles is closer in light of 7:37.

³⁰ For sources, see Craig Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (vol. 1; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003) 739.

³¹ Cf. Lev 23:43; Neh 8:13–9:38; Metzner, *Sünde im Johannesevangelium* 175–77.

³² For instance, in John 6, the setting is the Passover and Passover connections are present in 6:51–58, but the prevailing focus on the bread from heaven is more in keeping with events celebrated by the Feast of Tabernacles. Perhaps the best example is the blood and water from the side of Jesus in 19:34. Water and Spirit are tied in with the Feast of Tabernacles in 7:37–39. Given this prior association, the appearance of water in 19:34 may suggest that the death of Jesus has significance for the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles as well as the Passover. The fulfillment of all three Feasts mentioned in John, including the Feast of Dedication, appears to be tied up with the death of Jesus. For further evidence, see Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple* 160–80.

³³ For “you will know that I am,” see Exod 6:7; 10:2; 16:12; 29:46 (Israel); 7:5, 17; 8:22; 14:4 (Egyptians or Pharaoh); David Ball, “*I Am*” in *John’s Gospel: Literary Function, Background and Theological Implications* (JSNTSup 124; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 191–92. On God as Father and the Exodus, see especially Exod 4:22–23 and Deut 32:6. In several other places, one finds God referred to as Father when God’s people are in need of deliverance or anticipating a future act of deliverance like the Exodus (Isa 63:16–19; 64:8–12; Jer 3:19–23; 31:7–11; cf. Deut 32:1–43; Wis 2:16–18; Sir 23:1–6; Tob 13:4–5; 3 Macc 5:7–8). I recently presented a paper that provides further evidence for these points (“Freedom from Slavery to Sin and the Devil: John 8:31–47 and the Passover Theme of the Gospel of John” [paper presented at the Tyndale House Biblical Theology Study Group, Cambridge, UK, July 10, 2008]).

14:2–3). They also are still in slavery in that they belong to another father, the devil (8:38, 44). In other words, Jesus is showing in these verses that these Jews still belong to the kingdom of the devil, who is the ruler of this world (12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Their sinful actions show that they are slaves to sin and the devil.

Like he once sent Moses, God has sent Jesus to redeem God's people (8:36, 42).³⁴ Jesus has also come as God the redeemer, the "I am" (8:24, 28). Jesus announces in 8:12 that he is "the light of the world" who gives the "light of life" to his followers. His word is light.³⁵ Remaining in his word is the mark of the true disciples of Jesus (8:31). True disciples are those who come to know the truth and are set free by it (8:32). The truth reveals that Jesus is the "I am" so that his followers can truly believe in him as the "I am" and be delivered from death due to their sins (8:24). In other words, true disciples are those who keep his word, including believing in him, and "will never see death" (8:51).³⁶ Due to their belief, they became children "of God" rather than "of the devil" (1:12; 8:44, 47). Consequently, true disciples of Jesus are the true children of God, the Father, who are delivered from death and redeemed from slavery to sin and the devil. The time of redemption from slavery, the new exodus, is at hand.³⁷ Jesus has provided both the promise of deliverance for God's people and the warning of death for those who belong to the people of the devil.

In comparing the above situation with the exodus events, one notices the same kind of intensification that was noticed with respect to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This kind of intensification is a common aspect of the typological relationships one finds in John and the NT in general.³⁸ The opposing kingdom is now ruled by the devil and is the kingdom of this world. The threat of death now reaches to all of the people of the devil rather than just affecting the firstborn sons. Similarly, deliverance from death is secured for all of the people of God. Already in Exodus Israel's firstborn sons represented Israel as a whole in some way, because God calls Israel his firstborn son in his initial dealings with Pharaoh (Exod 4:22–23).³⁹ Finally, as seen below, the threat of death is also intensified, since death involves eternal death and not merely normal mortality.

Where does the "lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29) fit into the above picture? John 8:21–24, 51, especially when they are interpreted in light of related verses in the Gospel of John, indicate why such a lamb is required. Jesus addresses Jews who cannot go with him to the

³⁴ Exod 3:10, 13–15, 7:16. References to the sending of Jesus occur in 8:16, 18, 26, 29 as well.

³⁵ Cf. John 8:52.

³⁶ This is the first time in John where τηρέω ("keep" or "obey") is used with the word or commandments of Jesus (see 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10, 20). Keeping the Father's word appears in 8:55, 17:6. Cf. Sir 29:1. In the LXX, one commonly finds ποιέω or φυλάσσω associated with obedience to God's commandments. The aorist subjunctive of τηρέω here is analogous to its use in 15:10.

³⁷ Cf. John 1:23, which cites Isa 40:3, a verse commonly associated with a new Exodus theme in Isaiah (Keener, *John* 454 on John 1:29).

³⁸ See n. 27.

³⁹ Propp, *Exodus 1–18* 217, 457.

Father. They are still “of this world” and will die because of their sin(s).⁴⁰ Belief that Jesus is the “I am” is the only way to avoid death due to sin (8:24). A similar verse is found in John 3:36, an important parallel to 8:24 and 8:51. It begins by providing a positive parallel to 8:24, namely, “The one who believes in the Son has eternal life.” It adds a negative parallel to 8:51, namely, “But the one who does not obey the Son will not see life.” It concludes, “But the wrath of God remains on him.” In light of 3:36, 8:24, and 8:51, failure to believe in and obey Jesus means experience of the wrath of God due to sin, which results in eternal death.⁴¹ John 3:36, especially its ending, supports those interpreters who see death and sin in 8:24 as indicators of a need for atonement and forgiveness.⁴²

John 3:16–20 and 5:24, 29 are also important verses to consider alongside 8:24, 51. According to 3:16–18, believers will not perish, have eternal life, and are free from God’s judgment. Unbelievers are under God’s judgment due to unbelief. In 5:24, believers have eternal life, are free from judgment, and have passed out of death into life. A resurrection of judgment awaits unbelievers due to their evil deeds, including hating the light (3:19–20; 5:24). The Son and his words will judge them for their disobedience (5:22; 12:47–48). Their disobedience to the Son means that the judgment of God upon them will mean death rather than eternal life (3:36).

The previous two paragraphs show that death due to sin really means death due to God’s judgment on sin. Death means experience of his wrath/punishment for sin. The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world removes the world’s sin and guilt in that it removes sin and guilt from those who believe in Jesus. Prior to becoming disciples of Jesus, believers belonged to the world and needed the solution to their sin problem that the Lamb provides. In the OT, removal of sin and guilt is often associated with sacrifices of atonement. Through the offering of sacrifices of atonement, the people of God’s sins are forgiven and they are cleansed from their sins.⁴³ Jesus, the Lamb of God, gave himself as the sacrifice of atonement that would decisively remove the world’s sin and guilt.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ A causal understanding of ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν (“because of/for your sins”) is suggested by other verses in John (like 8:51, 3:36) and LXX parallels, including Ezek 3:18; 18:18, 24, 26; 33:18 (Metzner, *Sünde im Johannesevangelium* 169; cf. John 16:30; LXX use of ἐν in Num 16:26; 1 Kgdms 3:13; 4 Kgdms 24:3; Neh 9:37; Sir 16:9). A locative understanding (“in a state of sin”) is popular among interpreters. Rudolf Schnackenburg prefers the locative understanding, but still concludes that death is “a result of his sins” (*The Gospel according to John* [vol. 2; HTKNT; Tunbridge Wells: Burns and Oates, 1980] 197). Ezekiel 18 also contains parallels to ποιέω plus τὴν ἁμαρτίαν in John 8:34. In John 8:21, 24, the singular versus the plural is probably a move from a collective conception of sin to the plural form (“sins”) (Heinrich A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospel of John* [5th ed.; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884] 269; cf. Edwyn Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* [2d ed., ed. F. Davey; London: Faber and Faber, 1947] 334).

⁴¹ Cf. John 11:25–26. Hasitschka, *Befreiung von Sünde* 206–7; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2.197.

⁴² Meyer, *John* 269; Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (rev. ed.; NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 395; Knöppler, *Sühne im Neuen Testament* 248.

⁴³ Leviticus 4–7 (esp. chap. 5); 16:30; 17:11.

⁴⁴ See John 1:7–2:2; 3:5–6.

According to John, removal of sin and guilt must take place in order to be delivered from God's wrath and judgment, as well as their consequence, death. The original Passover can be seen in a similar light. According to Ps 78:49–51, the plague that kills the firstborn sons of Egypt displays the wrath of God on Egypt. It is one of his "great judgments" on Egypt (Exod 6:6, 7:4). The Passover sacrifice spares the firstborn sons from death due to a plague sent from God (Exod 12:12–13, 23). On some occasions in the OT, making atonement delivers God's people from a deadly plague that displays God's wrath on his people due to their sin.⁴⁵ The original Passover involves a similar scenario in which God's wrath comes upon the land of Egypt in the form of a deadly plague. The Passover lamb's blood prevents the plague from entering homes that have its blood around the doors.⁴⁶ It protects the firstborn sons in each of these homes, because this sacrifice makes atonement for the ones who are inside.⁴⁷ As the fulfillment of the Passover lamb, Jesus delivers believers from death due to God's wrath and judgment by removing their sin and guilt.

As noted in this paper's introduction, the reference to Jesus as the "lamb of God" (ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ) is not the most natural way to refer to Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement. Other animals would have been more natural choices to do this. Yet the Passover lamb appears to be a more suitable choice than is often appreciated due to its unique fit with John's Passover typology. In light of John 8, Jesus as Passover lamb is the suitable sacrifice given the overall picture that John is painting. The transfer from the kingdom of the world/devil to the kingdom of God requires redemption from that kingdom. The Passover lamb is the preeminent sacrifice associated with the redemption of the people of God in the OT.⁴⁸ God's plan of redemption from bondage requires the sacrifice of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12). Its necessity is especially notable with respect to the firstborn sons. Without it, they would die in Egypt, the kingdom of bondage, and never see freedom. Similarly, according to John's Passover typology, the Lamb of God is necessary in order to take away one's sins so that one will not die due to sin and never see life and freedom from bondage to sin and the devil. What OT sacrifice is more closely or famously associated with deliverance from death than the Passover lamb?

⁴⁵ Exod 30:11–16 (cf. 2 Sam 24, esp. 24:21; 1 Chronicles 21, esp. 21:22–27); Num 16:41–50; 25:7–13; see also Num 8:19.

⁴⁶ In *Jub.* 49:15, the yearly sacrifice of the Passover protects from the coming of a plague that kills or smites (Propp, *Exodus 1–18* 437, 439).

⁴⁷ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses* (vol. 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950) 221 (on Exod 12:21); Keil, *Pentateuch* 328–29 (on Exod 12:7). It is also possible that the Passover sacrifice protects the firstborn through purifying or sanctifying the house or those in it. Even in this case, atonement is a necessary aspect of such purification or sanctification (Exod 29:33; Lev 16:30; T. D. Alexander, "The Passover Sacrifice," in *Sacrifice in the Bible* [eds. R. T. Beckwith and M. Selman; Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1995] 8; Kiuchi, *Purification Offering* 96–98; Propp, *Exodus 1–18* 437). See the helpful summary of interpretations of the blood of the Passover lamb in Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus* (vol. 2; Kampen: Kok, 1996) 176–77.

⁴⁸ Marshall, "Redemption" 159–60.

Some interpreters have concluded that John views the Lamb of God as a combination of the Passover lamb with another OT background, because the Passover lamb has nothing to do with atonement.⁴⁹ In light of the above discussion, someone may still conclude that the Passover lamb aspect of the Lamb of God has to do with redemption from slavery to sin and the devil, while the atonement aspect of it is due to the contribution of another OT background.⁵⁰ Perhaps, but recall from the previous section that the Passover lamb sanctifies the firstborn (Num 3:13) and that its regulations resemble those for a sacrifice associated with the sanctification of the priests.⁵¹ In addition, firstborn male animals are supposed to be sanctified to the Lord for sacrifice in memory of the Exodus, when God sanctified the firstborn (Exod 13:2, 11–16; Deut 15:19–20).⁵² Exod 13:2 and Deut 15:19–20 often appear in commentaries in relation to John 17:19, because sanctification of an animal for sacrifice is rarely mentioned elsewhere in the OT.⁵³ According to John 17:19, at the last Passover in John, Jesus sanctifies himself for his disciples so that they might be sanctified by the truth (17:19). Jesus' sanctification is probably sanctification of himself as a sacrifice in light of "for them" (ὕπερ αὐτῶν).⁵⁴ Jesus therefore appears to be saying that one of the purposes of his sacrificial death is to sanctify his disciples.⁵⁵ Thus, his sacrifice sanctifies them like the Passover lamb sanctified the firstborn sons of Israel. Not only is this in keeping with the Passover sacrifice's association with sanctification of the firstborn, but it recalls one of the aspects of the Passover lamb that points to its value as a sacrifice of atonement.

A similar point can be made with respect to the cleansing value of the Passover blood. In the previous section, evidence from Josephus, Ezek 45:19, and purification rituals involving hyssop suggest that the Passover blood

⁴⁹ For example, Nielsen, "Lamb of God" 239–41, 255. Or, for this reason, some reject a Passover lamb background altogether.

⁵⁰ Cf. Marie-Émile Boismard, "Christ the Lamb, Redeemer of Men," in *The Theology of the Atonement* (ed. J. Sheets; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967) 166–67.

⁵¹ See nn. 16 and 17; Alexander, "Passover Sacrifice" 8. As seen there, the sanctification of the priests includes a sacrifice that makes atonement for them and is eaten by them (Exod 29:33). Also note that Heb 10:10 refers to being sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ (cf. 10:14).

⁵² Exod 13:2, 11–16; Deut 15:19–20.

⁵³ Exod 28:38 is another possible example (Morris, *John* 647). Although consecration is not specifically mentioned, note that the Passover lamb is set apart for sacrifice on the tenth day of the month, prior to its sacrifice on the fourteenth (Exod 12:3, 6).

⁵⁴ This is a common position among interpreters. See, for instance, Raymond Brown, *The Gospel according to John (XIII to XXI)* (AB 29a; New York: Doubleday, 1970) 766–77. Note the other verses having to do with the death of Jesus where ὑπερ is used (6:51; 10:11, 15; 11:51–52; 15:13; 18:14; Metzner, *Sünde im Johannesevangelium* 131).

⁵⁵ See Heb 10:10. Being sanctified by the truth probably suggests becoming sanctified by believing in Jesus and remaining in his word. Thus it is analogous to being set free by the truth (8:30–32). The first believers in Jesus are not fully sanctified until after Jesus dies and they receive the Spirit (7:37–39). The Spirit brings to believers the benefits of the sacrificial death of Jesus, including sanctification. Cf. Brown, *John* 766; Meyer, *John* 469.

may have something to do with purification from impurity and sin.⁵⁶ At least, Josephus shows that the blood of the Passover lamb could be regarded that way. If the Passover blood has something to do with the cleansing of the house or people in the house, then this is another thing that it has in common with the blood of Jesus.⁵⁷ It is fairly common for interpreters to see John 13:8–10 as anticipating the efficacy of the sacrificial death of Jesus for completing the cleansing of the disciples of Jesus from sin.⁵⁸ The setting for this teaching is the Passover (13:1). As with sanctification, cleansing from sin recalls one of the aspects of the Passover lamb that points to its value as a sacrifice of atonement. In the OT, making atonement by means of a sacrifice is sometimes related directly to sanctification and sometimes to purification from sin.⁵⁹ Kiuchi claims that making atonement is a necessary aspect of both of these.⁶⁰

Due to the evidence given so far, one should at least consider the possibility that a Passover lamb background could be a major contributor to the Gospel of John's portrayal of the sacrificial death of Jesus. The Passover lamb fits quite well with John's teaching on deliverance from death due to sin and God's judgment. In doing so, it plays a significant role in the Passover typology that one finds in John 8. Jesus' teaching on the threat of death and the need for redemption in 8:12–47 suggest a Passover scenario of significant proportions. The Passover lamb's connections with sanctification (17:19) and cleansing from sin (13:8–10) are also sufficiently strong to see how these could be related to a Passover background, especially given their Passover setting.

III. SECURING DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH: THE SACRIFICE OF THE TRUE PASSOVER LAMB AND THE TRUE PASSOVER MEAL

John has disclosed one purpose of the Lamb of God, namely, to protect the children of God from the threat of death. If the time of deliverance from death and slavery is truly at hand, then the time has come for the fulfillment of the Passover sacrifice and the Passover meal. John develops these two

⁵⁶ Josephus, *Ant.* 2.312; see n. 18; Houtman, *Exodus* 177. Similarly, notice how the author of Hebrews regards the blood of the covenant as effecting cleansing and mentions hyssop, although the OT does not explicitly mention either of these in connection with the blood of the covenant (9:19–22).

⁵⁷ Segal thinks the blood has to do with the people in the house rather than with the house itself (*Passover* 161).

⁵⁸ Beasley-Murray represents this view and summarizes its place among other interpretations of these verses (*John* 234–35). Regarding the power of the blood of Jesus to cleanse from sin, see 1 John 1:7 and Rev 7:14. Cf. Metzner, *Sünde im Johannesevangelium* 132.

⁵⁹ In Lev 16:18–19, all three come together.

⁶⁰ Lev 8:15; 16:14–19, 30; Ezek 43:20; Kiuchi, *Purification Offering* 96–98. Kiuchi claims, “*Kipper* [“make atonement”] expresses some act which enables progression from uncleanness to cleanness, from cleanness to holiness, and from uncleanness to holiness” (pp. 97–98).

elements of his Passover typology primarily in 19:31–36 and 6:51–58. These two passages share a concern for the body and blood of Jesus. They also show how the true Passover lamb benefits many so that they might partake of it and escape from death. John 6:51–58 is especially important with respect to bolstering the case for the Passover lamb as significant background for John's Lamb of God.

John 19:31–36 portrays the sacrifice of the Lamb of God in preparation for the true Passover meal.⁶¹ John 11:55 contains the first mention of the third Passover in the Gospel. In John 19, one finds John's most explicit Scripture citation connecting Jesus to the Passover lamb. The Passover context (19:14) and the mention of hyssop (19:29, Exod 12:22) are followed by the preservation of Jesus' legs from being broken and the piercing of his side (19:31–34). The blood of Jesus and the body/flesh of Jesus are both prominent in John's picture of Jesus on the cross. Given such a context, the Scripture quote in 19:36, "a bone of him/it will not be broken" surely points to Exod 12:10, 46 and Num 9:12, even if it may also point to Ps 34:20.⁶² Thus Jesus' fulfillment of Scripture here signifies his fulfillment of the Passover lamb with respect to his body. The blood flowing out from his side also points to his fulfillment of the Passover lamb, whose blood is poured out.⁶³

The mention of the blood coming from the side of Jesus recalls the only other mention of his blood (6:53–56). John 6:4 indicates that the setting for Jesus' teaching in John 6 is the Passover. As was the case in 8:21–24, 51, Jesus mentions both the promise of life and the threat of death.⁶⁴ The frequency of his mention of life and death makes it a main theme here. How does one escape the threat of death and gain eternal life? Two main answers emerge. First, one must come to Jesus and believe in him (6:29, 40, 47). Second, one must also eat the true bread from heaven, which is the flesh of Jesus, and must drink his blood (6:32–33, 51, 53–55). John 6:48–51 begins

⁶¹ Many recent interpreters insist that John's chronology places Jesus on the cross at the time when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple (see, e.g., Bruce Grigsby, "The Cross as an Expiatory Sacrifice in the Fourth Gospel," *JSNT* 15 (1982) 54–56; Keener, *John* 1130–31). This chronology is often appealed to as evidence that Jesus fulfills the Passover as the Passover lamb. Yet it appears to conflict with the time of Jesus' death in the Synoptics. The arguments for and against the possibility of harmonizing this apparent discrepancy are complex and cannot be reviewed adequately here. Even so, one should note that a minority voice continues to defend the possibility of a credible harmonization (esp. in light of 19:31), one which places Jesus on the cross on the day after the Passover meal (see Carson, *John* 455–58 [esp. p. 458, n. 1]; Barry D. Smith, "The Chronology of the Last Supper," *WTJ* 53 [1991] 29–45).

⁶² Interpreters generally agree with this position, which has a long history (see John Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 85). The dissenting view is found in the commentaries by C. H. Dodd and Theodor Zahn.

⁶³ When Jesus associates his blood with the wine at the Last Supper, he speaks of his blood as "poured out for many" (Matt 26:28, Mark 14:24). This points to a Passover connection for the blood, because the pouring out of blood is found several times in the OT with reference to the sacrifice (or slaughter) of animals (LXX of Lev 4:7, 17:3; Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* [London: SCM, 1966] 222). Although John 6 does not mention the pouring out of Jesus' blood, John is obviously concerned about it, since he is the only Gospel writer to record the flow of blood from the side of Jesus on the cross (19:34). Jesus' teaching in John 6:53–55 appears to presuppose it, since it makes sense that the blood must be poured out before one can drink it.

⁶⁴ John 6:27, 33, 40, 47, 49–51, 53–54, 57–58, 63.

the section that focuses attention on the second answer. The true bread from heaven is obviously greater than the manna that anticipated it, because those who ate the manna still died (6:49). Eating the bread from heaven means that one will live forever (6:50–51).

In 6:51, Jesus calls himself the “living bread” and says that one who eats this bread will live forever. He then says, “the bread which I will give for the life of the world is my flesh” (6:51c). Giving himself for (ὕπερ) the life of the world anticipates his substitutionary death in light of parallel statements elsewhere.⁶⁵ Giving his flesh sounds like he is talking about his death in sacrificial terms, especially in combination with the mention of blood in 6:53. Flesh/meat and blood are the two main components of a sacrifice, including the Passover sacrifice (Exod 12:7–8). In 6:51–56, one can readily see a possible relationship between eating the flesh of Jesus and the Passover, since the Passover lamb was eaten (Exod 12:8). The connection between the blood of Jesus and the blood of the Passover lamb is more difficult. The blood of the Passover lamb was a central aspect of the Passover celebration, but obviously not for drinking (Exod 12:7, Lev 17:10–14).

The solution to the dilemma is hinted at in John 6:63, which says that the Spirit, not the flesh, gives life. One aspect of the significance of this verse is that it helps to clarify that Jesus is talking in symbolic language rather than actually advocating that one eat human flesh and drink human blood. Eating his physical flesh would not give life, just as eating the manna did not give life.⁶⁶ Without going into details here, Jesus appears to be saying that one needs to appropriate (“eat” and “drink”) the benefits of his sacrificial death (“flesh” and “blood”) in order to have eternal life.⁶⁷ John 6:63 provides further help in that it points to the way in which the believer will eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus. If it is the Spirit that gives life, then it is likely to be the Spirit that feeds the believer with the life-giving benefits of the sacrificial death of Jesus.⁶⁸ The Spirit is elsewhere referred to in terms of living water that the believer will receive after Jesus is glorified (7:37–39).⁶⁹ One can already begin to experience the Spirit’s life-giving power by receiving the words of Jesus (6:63).⁷⁰ However, the full gift of the Spirit is only available after Jesus returns to the Father (6:33) and sends the Spirit (16:7). It is through the Spirit that believers drink living water. It is also through the Spirit that believers partake of the body and blood of Jesus.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Metzner, *Sünde im Johannesevangelium* 131; John 10:11, 15; 11:51–52; 15:13; 17:19; 18:14.

⁶⁶ F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 163; Carson, *John* 301; James Dunn, “John VI: A Eucharistic Discourse?,” *NTS* 17 (1971) 336–37; Keener, *John* 694; Schnackenburg, *John* 2.71–72.

⁶⁷ Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel according to John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 242; Gerald Borchert, *John 1–11* (NAC 25A; Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996) 271; Bruce, *John* 159–60; Keener, *John* 690; Morris, *John* 335.

⁶⁸ Carson, *John* 302; Dunn, “John VI” 336–37.

⁶⁹ See also John 4:10–14.

⁷⁰ Cf. Carson, *John* 301–2.

⁷¹ Dunn, “John VI” 336–38; Keener, *John* 690. When one considers Jesus’ earlier emphasis on coming to him and believing in him (6:35–40, 44–47) in order to have life, believing precedes eating

John 19:34 provides support for such a line of interpretation in that blood and water come out of the side of Jesus when it is pierced. If the blood signifies Jesus' offering of his own blood in order to give life to believers (6:51–58), then the water probably symbolizes the Spirit who makes it possible for believers to appropriate the benefits of Jesus' sacrificial death for them.⁷²

In line with 1:29 and 8:12–47, one notices in 6:26–58 some of the consistent elements associated with John's Passover typology. Like the Lamb of God, Jesus' gift of himself is for the world (6:51). As in 8:24, people who belong to the world must believe in Jesus in order to be delivered from death (6:40, 47). By remaining in his word, people become true children of God who can remain in the Father's house and enjoy freedom from slavery to sin and the devil (8:31–36). As a result of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus, people remain in Jesus and he remains in them, which means they are true children of God and are free from the threat of death (6:53–56).⁷³

The crucial element of John 6 for John's Passover typology is its emphasis upon partaking of the benefits of the sacrificial death of Jesus in order to have life. Faith in Jesus involves faith in the one who is the Lamb of God who dies to secure life for the world. The sacrificial death of Jesus secures the possibility of life, but only believers receive the Spirit who imparts the body and blood of Jesus to them so that they may have life. In the Passover event, God provided the instructions for the Passover sacrifice. Deliverance from death was only possible for those who performed the sacrifice and placed blood on their doorposts.⁷⁴ Both Origen and Cyril of Alexandria connect 6:53 to the Passover in that the sacrifice of the Passover lamb was necessary in order to escape death brought by the destroyer.⁷⁵

John 6:51–58 also strengthens the significance of the Passover as a significant contributor to the background for John's presentation of the Lamb of God. These verses draw attention to two unique aspects of the Passover sacrifice that one can add to its uniqueness in terms of deliverance from

and drinking, but believing is not the same thing as eating and drinking as some interpreters suggest (see, for example, Craig Koester, "John Six and the Lord's Supper," *LQ* 4 [1990] 430). By way of analogy, note that receiving living water (the Spirit) comes after believing and gives eternal life (4:14; 7:37–39). Receiving living water is not the same thing as believing.

⁷² For further on this, see Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple* 179–80. Cf. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978) 556–57; Carson, *John* 624; Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel* 533; Edward Malatesta, "Blood and Water from the Pierced Side of Christ (Jn 19,34)," in *Segni e sacramenti nel Vangelo di Giovanni* (ed. P.-R. Tragan, Studia Anselmiana 66; Rome: Editrice Anselmiana, 1977) 175; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John* (vol. 3; HTKNT; New York: Crossroad, 1982) 294.

⁷³ John 15:1–8; John Pryor, *John: Evangelist of the Covenant People: The Narrative and Themes of the Fourth Gospel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992) 161–62.

⁷⁴ The necessity of celebrating subsequent Passovers is also stressed (Num 9:13; Exod 12:42). See Origen, *Pasch.* 14.1–10.

⁷⁵ Origen, *Pasch.* 14.1–14; Cyril of Alexandria's commentary on John at 6:53. I follow the numbering of Origen's work found in Origen, *Treatise on the Passover and Dialogue of Origen with Heraclides and His Fellow Bishops on the Father, the Son, and the Soul* (trans. Robert Daly; ACW 54; New York: Paulist, 1992) 27–56.

death. First, which other OT sacrifice is more well-known as a sacrifice that had to be sacrificed by all of the people of God in order to be delivered from death? Second, which other OT sacrifice is more well-known as a sacrifice that God commanded all of the people to sacrifice and eat of its flesh? The guilt offering mentioned in Isaiah 53 was not this kind of sacrifice. Only priests are allowed to eat portions of it (Lev 7:1-7).

IV. CONCLUSION

The evidence presented above seems sufficient to suggest that Passover typology should be regarded as significant for interpretation of the Gospel of John, more significant than recent interpreters usually have seen. A tendency to focus too narrowly on 1:29 and its OT background has likely contributed to a lack of appreciation for the broader Passover picture that the Gospel of John paints. The Gospel encourages one to think in terms of redemption of believers from slavery to sin and the devil (8:31-47). It also connects the Lamb of God with deliverance of believers from death due to sin. This deliverance comes from eating the Lamb's flesh and drinking his blood (1:29; 6:47-58; 8:21-24). John contains a Passover sacrifice (19:31-36) and a Passover meal as well as teaching on the benefits secured by this sacrifice and those who celebrate the Feast (6:51-58). In these respects, Jesus is presented as bringing the fulfillment of the Passover to those who believe in the Lamb of God and appropriate the benefits of his sacrificial death. This is a fitting presentation for a Gospel written to encourage belief that leads to life (20:31).