

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW – THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS’ LIFE ON EARTH

Week 3 – Appointed Times!

February 7, 2023

UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE: Genesis 22

Genesis 22: ram/lamb?

Why do we find a ram in Gen. 22 in the midst of much focus on a lamb/the lamb?

Let’s observe, ask questions, and discover answers.

Basic observations from the text...from Gen. 22: (tool: lexicon: blueletterbible.org)

- Isaac asked *where is the lamb for a burnt offering?* Lamb in the Hebrew is *se* (pronounced “say”)
- A lexicon search on “lamb” in Gen. 22; Ex. 12; and Isa. 53 – the passages in our study last week – the “lamb” is *se* - Gen. 22; Ex. 12; Isa. 53
- God promised Abraham a lamb – *se*. God promised to provide Himself the lamb (Gen. 22:8) – *se*.
- Does God deliver on His promises? Yes...ALWAYS!
- Therefore, God will provide Himself the *se* in the future. If He didn’t... He is not faithful!
- There is a future re: the lamb noted in Gen. 22.
- Other than offered in certain sacrifices for 1500 years, we don’t see a future of the ram. We don’t see a ram in the throne room of God in Rev 5 or in the eternal state in Rev. 22.

Using a Bible dictionary, NOT a commentary, I read that there are numerous species within the sheep category. The ram is one of the species but there are differences.

- Different Hebrew words: Lamb – *se* (say); Ram – *a’yil* (a-yiel)
- Lamb – young sheep (Ex. 12:3 – the Passover lambs taken into homes in Egypt for the first Passover were to be spotless, a male of the first year)
- Ram – *ayill* – mature sheep w/ horns (Gen. 22:13 – *a ram caught in the thicket by its horns*)

The question remains...WHY was the ram sacrificed in this passage? The first verse gives us a clue! Gen. 22:1 - *Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!”*

- Why is God testing Abraham? We need to understand what was occurring in Abraham’s life esp. in his relationship with God.
- To “test” carries with it the intent to prove.
- WHY would God need to TEST Abraham? Was Abraham always compliant? Did Abraham always obey God without any issues?
 - Abram – went down into Egypt (Gen. 12) after seemingly not consulting God (famine)...after God promised Abram land, seed, blessing!
 - Abram told Sarai to lie to Pharaoh in Egypt! AND, then lie to Abimelech in Gen. 20 under similar circumstances.

- Abram had an issue with God in Gen. 15 re: God NOT YET giving Abram the son of promise! Abram was demanding God to do something re: His promise of a

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Son for Sarai and Abram! Abram's tone in Gen. 15 seems to indicate that he was annoyed with God!

- Abraham questioned God when God stated that His covenant would be made through Isaac. Gen. 17:18 - *And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!"* – Why can't you carry out Your promise through Ishmael?
- It appears that this sacrifice was a test for Abraham due to Abraham's doubting God/offending God. What sacrifice would appease God?

Within the various sacrifices in the Torah (Lev. 1:1-7:38) there are three voluntary sacrifices and two mandatory sacrifices. The mandatory sacrifices: sin offering - for the common person: a lamb was offered. trespass offering – exclusively a ram was offered as a trespass offering. And, a trespass offering was offered as a reimbursement to the offended party! (Lev. 5:15-16; Lev. 6:1-6)

I'm suggesting that this is why a ram is mentioned. Abraham offended God. There needed to be restitution. It seems that God showed Abraham this through placing a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. Was the sacrifice of the ram necessary? Yes as Abraham had offended God!

And, the difference between the ram and the lamb highlights why the Jewish people were to look forward to the "Lamb of God"...why lambs were sacrificed during the first Passover (Ex. 12)...why the Suffering Servant, Jesus, was led as a lamb to the slaughter (Isa. 53:7)...why John the Immerser could proclaim, *Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world!* (John 1:29).

AND, it was THE PROMISE of the LAMB OF GOD, not the ram, coming from our FAITHFUL GOD which gives us the directive/impetus to look forward to HIM - the LAMB (*se*) that would be PROVIDED in the area of Mount Moriah!

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We so often hear "The Passion of Christ"! The word "passion" is from the Latin word, *pati*, which simply means "to endure" or "to suffer." Jesus' suffering was real. Jesus felt the nails! Jesus...fully man/fully God! Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, *My Father, if it is possible, may this cup* (speaking of His destiny) *be taken from Me* (Matt. 26:39). In Scripture "cup" often speaks of judgment. NOTE: Psa. 116:13 speaks of the cup of salvation. In Jesus' prayer to God the Father, Jesus knew that the cup of blessing could only be poured out for the salvation of many if He would first drink the cup of God's judgment on all humanity.

In the garden we see Jesus in anguish. In Lk. 22:44 (Dr. Luke wrote Luke) we're told that His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. In Matt. 26:38 & Mk. 14:34 we read of Jesus' anguish in these words, *My soul is overwhelmed*

with sorrow to the point of death. There is a medical condition that produces the symptoms described and explains Luke's mention of blood. Hematidrosis is a rare, but very real, medical condition that causes one's sweat to contain blood. The sweat glands are surrounded by tiny blood vessels that can constrict and then dilate to the point of rupture. The cause of hematidrosis is extreme anguish.

Jesus, as Immanuel, God in the flesh, knew *all that was going to happen to Him* (John 18:4). He knew He was going to be betrayed by one of His disciples. He knew He was about to undergo several trials where all of the witnesses against Him would lie. He

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knew He would be flogged nearly to the point of death before they pounded the nails into His flesh. He knew the prophetic words of Isaiah that He would be beaten so badly that He would be "disfigured beyond that of any man" and "beyond human likeness" (Isa. 52:14).

Crucifixion was considered to be the most painful and torturous method of execution ever devised and was used on the most despised and wicked people. In fact, so horrific was the pain that it was described as *excruciating*, a word which literally means "from the cross."

Jesus came to earth for the purpose of laying down His life for us. Yes, anguish... but JOY because He is God! And so we read in Heb. 12:1-2 - ... *let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the **joy** that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame....* The cross didn't just "happen." He came to die on the cross! Rev. 13:8 – Jesus is *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* This was God's plan. Isa. 53:10 – it pleased the Father to bruise the Son if He, the Son, Jesus, rendered Himself an offering for sin! We can further state that Jesus' passion was a settled purpose!

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FEASTS OF THE LORD CHART (separate handout)

Jesus is the Lamb of God...Paul called Him our Passover as He is the perfect Passover Lamb, ...*indeed Christ, our Passover* (the sacrifice of Pesach/Passover), *was sacrificed for us* (I Cor. 5:7). Pesach in Hebrew means to pass over; the root: to spread the wings over; to protect. What is the connection between Passover and Jesus? Why do Gentile believers present Passover Seders? What's the big deal? What is all this Passover reflection?

The Feasts of the LORD speak to God's plan of redemption/salvation that impacts the world! For our lesson today, we're going to focus on the Feast of Passover.

NOTE: There are four columns. Each Feast is noted in the first column. The second column – moving across the page - tells us why the feast is commemorated in Israel's history. The third column tells us how each feast is fulfilled in Jesus! The fourth column tells us about the application of each feast to believers as it relates to our salvation.

God gave Israel seven Feasts which are divided according to the spring feasts and the fall feasts. The Jewish "religious" year begins in the spring with Passover. The spring feasts speak to Jesus' first coming. These four spring feasts have been fulfilled.

The fall feasts speak to Jesus' second coming. The fall feasts have not yet been fulfilled.

The Hebrew word for feasts is *mow-ed* which means APPOINTED times. "Appointed times" means that these feasts are FIXED – they are not going to change. The word "appointed" in Hebrew also encompasses an appointed place and an appointed meeting... God meeting with man. God desired to draw near to the children of Israel and to have them draw near to Him. What a beautiful picture of God's heart!

PASSOVER is the first feast that God gave the Jewish people. Passover is significant. Passover impacts the world which includes us!! CONSIDER: whenever we attend church, Sunday school, Bible study...it's because of Passover! WHY? HOW?

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PASSOVER historically commemorates the first Passover in Egypt when God delivered the children of Israel from bondage to slavery in Egypt after following His instructions in Ex. 12 to kill spotless lambs and apply their blood. When the unblemished lambs were slaughtered and their blood smeared on the doorposts and lintels of their homes – and God passed over those homes with the blood applied – God ransomed/rescued/delivered the people in each home with the lamb's blood applied to their door.

The Fulfillment of Passover is the crucifixion of the Messiah Jesus.

The Application of Passover is redemption...freedom from the bondage of sin forever because we are declared righteous by God (II Cor. 5:21)!

Lev. 23:4 - *These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.* Jesus fulfilled Passover. He died at the appointed time...on Passover.

Jesus' passion was a settled purpose – settled from eternity past (Rev. 13:8):

Gal. 4:4 - *...when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.*

Jesus was prophesied to be born (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Isa. 9:6). He was to enter this world as a Jewish man (Dt. 18:15-18 – one of Moses' brethren). Jesus is from the lineage of King David (Gen. 49:10 [of the tribe of Judah]; Matt. 1:1 – *Son of David, Son of Abraham*). Being born "under the law," Jesus perfectly obeyed the law. Jesus declared that He came to fulfill the law, all 613 commandments (Matt. 5:17).

Jesus obeyed Deut. 16:16! Deut. 16:16 speaks of what Jewish people called the pilgrim feasts.

Deut. 16:16 - *Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses (II Chron. 6:6 – *I have chosen Jerusalem, that My name may be there*): at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (interchangeable w/ Passover), at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.*

No matter where a Jewish man lived in the known world, he was to travel to Jerusalem three times a year, at the pilgrim feasts. Many brought their families (Luke 2:41).

While Jesus spent much time away from Judea during His ministry...away from Jerusalem due to the growing hostility, as a faithful/obedient Jewish man, as the Messiah, Jesus traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the “pilgrim” feasts. We read of Jesus escaping from those who wished to stone Him/harm Him. BUT, now was the hour!

And so we read, Matt. 16:21 - *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.*

From what time? What had transpired?

Matt. 12 – the Jewish religious leadership had rejected Jesus as the Messiah.

Matt. 13 – Jesus began instructing the disciples regarding what would transpire between His first coming and His second coming when He would not be on the earth.

Matt. 14 – Jesus continued to instruct His disciples looking toward their ministry.

Continued intense hostility grew against Jesus.

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Matt. 16:21 is the first time in the Gospel of Matthew that we read of Jesus telling His disciples He was going to Jerusalem...to die. He outlined the sequence of events:

- He must go to Jerusalem, the appointed place of sacrifice: Jerusalem (Mount Moriah – chosen by Jehovah; the threshing floor depicting both separation and judgment).
- He must suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law.
- He must be killed.
- He would be resurrected the third day.

What was the response on the part of the disciples?

Matt. 16:22 *Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’*

Peter took Jesus aside from the other disciples. The word translated “rebuked” means to reprove, censure, or warn in order to prevent an action from happening. Peter most adamantly sought to prevent Jesus from going to Jerusalem...to prevent Jesus from dying on the cross!

Jesus’ reply to Peter was stronger. Jesus...*turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense (a trap; a snare) to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’* (Matt. 16:23)

Why did Jesus address Peter as Satan? Peter was expressing Satan’s desire...to prevent Jesus from going to the cross to become a sacrifice for the sin of the world. In the temptation/the testing of Jesus in the wilderness following Jesus’ baptism, Satan had offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. Satan had offered Jesus a throne without a cross.

Why would Peter rebuke Jesus? Earlier in Matt. 16, Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. In Peter's mind, based on the teaching of the Rabbis at that time and on many OT Scriptures regarding the Messiah revealing Himself as the conquering King (Isa. 9:6-7; anointed Conqueror (59:21; 61:1-3; 61:10-62:12; 63:1-6; - cross reference), the disciples believed that Jesus would not die...that His full presence would be manifested...that He would manifest Himself in all His glory and cast off the burden of Rome.

The Hebrew Scripture teaches that the Messiah will reign but, by His death, He must provide for the redemption of sinners. Suffering was not a cup that could be taken from the Son. Jesus laid His life down for us to be reconciled to God...to be forgiven... to be placed into a right relationship with God...to be saved from the wrath of God because of our sin!

Jesus is our perfect Passover Lamb who died at the appointed time, in the appointed place, in the appointed way!

QUESTIONS

Who is Jesus to you?

How have you been impacted through grasping Jesus final days?

Did you have V8 moments?

How has your faith been strengthened?

What questions do you have based on this lesson?

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SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread Week 3's handout w/ references.

Continue writing in your journal (if you've started a journal) re: impactful Scripture and how you are marveling at God!

Pray that God will bring people into your life w/ whom you can share.

Read Week 4 when you receive it.