

Jesus as the Fulfillment of Salvation Symbolism: Theological Study of John's Gospel

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Abstract: This study explores the continuity of the concept of salvation history (Old Testament) which is a topic of interest to readers of John's Gospel, having symbolic elements of Jewish festivals. Through a reading of John's Gospel, the reader discovers how not only Jesus is presented theologically as the Messiah but also the concrete fulfillment of what God revealed in the festivals and temples of that time. However, the understanding of how Jesus fulfills the symbols and festivals of the Old Testament has been the subject of theological debate. This research was conducted with a descriptive approach, by conducting a literature study related to salvation history from the perspective of the Gospel of John. It seeks to reveal how the Gospel of John reinterprets the festivals of salvation, offering a new understanding of Jesus as the true and final fulfillment of the new Passover for all believers and the establishment of Holy Communion in the Christian tradition. Jesus fulfills the symbolic meaning of the Feast of Salvation, and the Old Testament is seen as a shadow pointing to the ultimate reality in Christ. Jesus' participation in and reinterpretation of the feast is especially during His last supper, which is the Passover meal.

Keywords: Jesus, symbol fulfillment, celebration of salvation.

INTRODUCTION

The Jewish festivals in the Old Testament Bible have deep significance in Christian beliefs as they relate to salvation and penance. Many scholars and theologians believe that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment and fulfillment of these festivals in the Old Testament by transforming them into spiritual realities that reflect the essence of Christian salvation. However, it is necessary to comprehensively examine how each element of the festivals symbolically refers to the life of Jesus from His birth to His resurrection. Within the overall narrative strategy of the Gospel, the use of "the Jews" can be seen as part of John's strategy to call both Jews and non-Jews to believe that Jesus is the unique and saving revelation of God. This is also supported by Wheaton's analysis showing that the Jewish festivals in John's Gospel are not mere historical markers but an integral part of the Gospel's theological and narrative strategy. They deepen

understanding of Jesus' identity and mission, inviting readers to see him as the fulfillment of Israel's hope and as the central figure in God's redemptive plan (Wheaton, 2015).

The Old Testament continuum contains types and shadows that point forward to Christ (Hebrews 10:1). The sacrificial system, the law, and the promises of the coming Messiah all foreshadow the work of Christ, who is the ultimate fulfillment of these types. Therefore, although the Old Testament was temporary, it was always meant to be fulfilled in the New Testament in Christ. For example, the sacrificial lamb in the Exodus story (Exodus 12:1-30) pictures Christ, who is called "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Compare John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7). According to Johnson, "Typology in Christian theology is the study of how elements in the Old Testament foreshadow New Testament events. The feasts provide a rich framework for understanding how Jesus fulfills Jewish religious rituals" (Johnson, 2010). Typology in Christian theology refers to the interpretation of elements in the Old Testament (people, events, institutions, or objects) as foreshadowing or "types" of the larger reality revealed in the New Testament.

Symbolic representations find their ultimate fulfillment in Christ and the events of the Gospels, which provide continuity between the two covenants. In this regard, Beale argues, "When we attempt to study the biblical conception of mystery in the New Testament, we must pay attention to how mystery functions in the Old Testament and Jewish writings. To ignore the Old Testament and Jewish background of the term is to cut off much of its meaning from the New Testament, leaving us with a greatly impoverished portrait of it" (Gladd, 2014). We have to pay attention to how the mysteries function in the Old Testament and Jewish writings, the Jewish background, and understand their meaning from the New Testament so that we have a broader picture. This is also stated by Sequeira, "interpreting the types of a text never contravenes the original meaning of a passage nor are such interpretations a product of a reader's interpretive imagination. Instead, typology emerges from the interpretive logic found in the biblical-theological exegesis modeled by NT authors. Interpretation of types is an outgrowth of NT authors' textual development of the significance of the persons, events, and institutions across the redemptive-historical epochs in the canon of Scripture" (Sequeira, A., & Emadi, 2017). Type exegesis is the result of New Testament writers' textual development of the significance of the persons, events, and institutions across the redemptive-historical epochs in the canon of Scripture.

The continuity of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments reflects progressive revelation, in which God's truth is progressively revealed, becoming clearer as time passes and culminating in Jesus Christ. The moral and spiritual truths in the Old Testament are still relevant and authoritative for believers, though now understood through the lens of the gospel. The idea of Jesus as the fulfillment of the symbolism found in the celebration of salvation is a profound theological theme. In Christian theology, particularly from a New Testament perspective, Jesus is seen as the ultimate fulfillment of the Old Testament festivals that symbolize God's redemptive plan. These festivals, rooted in the Old Testament, serve as shadow elements, pointing to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This study seeks to uncover the symbolism behind festivals such as Passover and how they showcase Jesus' saving work. Jesus' sacrifice is seen as the ultimate Passover sacrifice, through which humanity is freed from sin and death. "The Passover feast, which included the sacrifice of a spotless lamb, is seen

as a precursor to the crucifixion of Jesus, who is referred to as the 'Passover Lamb' in the New Testament" (Doe, 2015).

Understanding how Jesus fulfills the symbols and festivals of the Old Testament has been the subject of theological debate for as long as. This debate has been a source of tension among theologians, as it involves understanding the relationship between the two Testaments and how Jesus' life, death, and resurrection harmonize with scriptural themes. The main debate concerns the continuity between the Old and New Testaments. It is argued that there is a significant discontinuity, stating that the Old Testament while containing valuable insights, was fundamentally altered or even superseded by God's revelation in Christ (Wright, 2017).

Previous research related to the theme under study has been carried out by several researchers but has differences, namely: Elim Simamora and friends conducted a study, "The Theological Meaning of Jewish Holidays in the Gospel of John," discussing the theological meaning of Jewish holidays recorded by the author of the Gospel of John. The main reason for conducting this study is to see the theological meaning contained in it, which is considered important to be understood by Christians, considering that in the history of the development of Christian theology, there is still a link between Old Testament Judaism and New Testament theology (Simamora et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Daniel Lindung Adiatma conducted a study, "The Event of Jesus' Crucifixion Viewed from the Perspective of John's History and Theology," presenting a literary analysis of the Gospel of John 11:1-12:36 to find the historical factuality of Jesus' crucifixion and the theological meaning behind the event field (Adiatma, 2022). Both studies have outlined the connection between the history of Israel's festivals and New Testament theology, especially in John's writings, but according to the researchers, the two studies have not included discussions of important themes ("Jesus the Lamb of God," "Bread of Life," "Passover and Passover Sacrifice") that are central to John's theology related to fulfilling the symbolism of the celebration of salvation. Some passages in John's Gospel that relate to Jesus as the fulfillment of the symbolism of the celebration of salvation, such as in the Jewish tradition, Passover commemorates the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt by God, which is marked by the blood of sacrificial lambs, linking the death of Jesus with the sacrificial lamb in the Passover ritual, which symbolizes that Jesus' death will provide salvation and final liberation for humanity. It is hoped that this study can contribute to Christian theology to deepen the understanding of how Jesus embodies the concept of salvation in Christian theology, which enhances the significance of these festivals for the Christian faith today. To help readers understand the continuity between the Old and New Testaments, emphasizing that Jesus is the culmination of God's saving work throughout History, as well as contributing to a deeper theological understanding of how Jesus fulfilled the symbols of the Old Testament festivals of salvation is not just a historical event but has practical implications for Christians today, especially in terms of understanding salvation, and shows that salvation is not just an abstract theological concept, but is rooted in historical and symbolic actions that find their meaning in Jesus.

METHOD

This research was conducted with a descriptive approach by conducting a literature study through books and journals related to salvation history from the perspective of the Gospel of John so that conclusions can be drawn about salvation history to then be used as the basis or subject matter of Bible teaching. In the context of John's Gospel, the methodology involves interpreting the text in a way that takes into account its historical context and explores its theological implications, especially in terms of how it reveals the nature of God, the person of Jesus Christ, and the relationship between believers and God (Keener, 2012). Kostenberger explains that interpreters of Scripture are faced with three unavoidable realities that they need to deal with in interpretation: (1) the reality of God and His revelation in Scripture (theology); (2) the existence of texts containing that revelation that require interpretation (language and literature); and (3) the reality of history, or, more specifically, salvation history, i.e., the fact that God's revelation to man, conveyed by biblical texts, took place in human history. The books were written by people with certain beliefs, convictions, and experiences (Kostenberger, 2009).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Jesus as the "Lamb of God"

The term "Lamb of God" is characteristic in John's Gospel about Jesus. To describe Jesus in depth, linking his role and mission to the Jewish sacrificial tradition. When John the Baptist saw Jesus approaching, he proclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). The Lamb of God (Yun: Ἀμνὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, *Amnos tou Theou*; Latin: *Agnus Dei*) is a title for Jesus that appears in the Gospel of John 1:29. The phrase reflects several theological concepts rooted in the Old Testament and Jewish customs, particularly with regards to sacrifice, forgiveness, and redemption. In Jewish tradition, lambs were commonly used as sacrifices, especially in the Passover ritual (Exodus 12:1-14). According to Johnson, "the pronouncement in John 1:29 can only be understood as pointing to Jesus as the "Lamb of God," who reconciles the world to God; a fitting development to the prologue's description of his reconciliatory coming into the world. This title for Jesus is sacrificial, especially with the inclusion of the explanatory description regarding the removal of sin" (A. J. Johnson, 2017). This title for Jesus is sacrificial, especially with the inclusion of the explanatory description regarding the removal of sin. During Passover, a lamb is sacrificed, which symbolizes Israel's liberation from slavery in Egypt. By referring to Jesus as the "Lamb of God," John the Baptist aligned Jesus' mission with this sacrificial tradition, indicating that Jesus would be the sacrifice for human sin, leading to spiritual liberation. According to Lincoln, John's portrayal of Jesus as a sacrificial lamb was an act of John deliberately using sacrificial language to emphasize Jesus' voluntary self-sacrifice, framing it as an act of divine love and reconciliation. Lincoln also discusses how this sacrificial identity is developed throughout the Gospels, culminating in Jesus' crucifixion (Lincoln, 2018).

In John 1:29, 36, John the Baptist refers to Jesus as "the Lamb of God". According to Christensen, John brings up the three most frequently discussed backgrounds for John 1:29 concerning Isaiah 53, understood in its typological trajectory. The lamb in Genesis 22 is a type of substitutionary sacrifice, the Passover lamb repeats that type during the exodus and adds

resistance to wrath, and the lamb-like Servant repeats the type of the Passover lamb and adds (1) atonement, (2) human substitution, and (3) the possibility of divine identity for the substitute field (Christensen, 2023).

The use of the "Lamb of God" in John's Gospel about Christ is unique. John the Baptist introduces Jesus, leading to a climactic declaration of a twofold nature (John 1: 29,36). First, the idea of the "Lamb of God" clearly refers to the Old Testament idea of sacrifice, for "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" (Heb 9:22) (Rainbow, 2014). Second, John also places John the Baptist's declaration into the broader context of his passion narrative, where Jesus is presented as the ultimate fulfillment of the annual Passover lamb, whose bones are not to be broken (Jn 19:14, 36; cf. Ex 12:46; Num 9:12; Ps 34:20; 1 Cor 5:7).

John's gospel often describes Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. The prophet Isaiah spoke of a "suffering servant" who would bear the sins of many (Isaiah 53:7), and this image overlaps with the idea of a sacrificial lamb. So, by referring to Jesus as the "Lamb of God," John connects Jesus to this prophetic vision, showing Jesus as the person who fulfills the role of the suffering servant, bearing human burdens and restoring people to God. According to Kostenberger, the idea that the Messiah would suffer for the sins of the world (not just for Israel) was foreign to first-century Jewish ears, yet John makes the description clear by arguing that Jesus came to save the whole world (Jn 3:17; 1 Jn 2:2) and that he is the Savior of the world, not just of Israel (Jn 4:42; 1 Jn 4:14). The New Testament description of Jesus as the "Lamb of God" culminates in Revelation, where Jesus is the "lamb that was slain" and returns in universal victory (Kostenberger, 2009). Thus, John's Gospel differs from the other Gospels by placing Jesus' crucifixion on the day before Passover rather than on the eve of Passover (Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Mark 15:25; Luke 23:33-34). This timing allows John to depict Jesus' death at the same time as the ritual slaughter of the lamb, symbolically aligning Jesus' sacrifice with the traditional Passover lamb. This literary choice underscores Jesus' role in fulfilling and transcending the Old Testament sacrificial system, presenting Jesus as the eternal source of salvation.

Jesus as the "Bread of Life"

In the Gospel of John, Jesus refers to Himself as "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to Me will never hunger again, and whoever believes in Me will never thirst again." (John 6:35). The "Bread of Life" discourse in John's Gospel (John 6:22-59) offers deep insights into Jesus' mission and identity, using the image of "bread" as a metaphor for spiritual nourishment. According to Heilmann, *"the Bread of Life discourse (John 6:22-59) can be analyzed as a textual phenomenon that makes use of the imagery of eating and drinking but does not refer to a specific meal practice of early Christians"* (Jan Heilmann, 2018). The Bread of Life Discourse (John 6:22-59) can be analyzed as a textual phenomenon that makes use of the imagery of eating and drinking but does not refer to a specific meal practice of early Christians. In the ancient world, bread was a daily necessity, and the identification of Jesus as the "Bread of Life" emphasizes his role in providing spiritual nourishment and eternal life to all who believe.

The phrase εἰμι (Egō time) - "I am" The phrase is a direct link to the divine name revealed to Moses (Exodus 3:14). Jesus' use of this phrase is not simply self-identification but also a

statement about His divine nature and His role as the source of life. By using this phrase, Jesus is claiming Himself to be the self-existent God who provides life. Scott discusses how the use of Ἐγώ εἰμι in John's Gospel not only emphasizes Jesus' self-identification but also aligns Him with the divine name revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14, reinforcing the theological theme of Jesus' divinity and His unique relationship with God (Scott, 2021). This relationship emphasizes Jesus' divinity and His central role in the divine salvation narrative. For example, in John 8:58, Jesus' statement "Before Abraham was, I was" (ἐγώ εἰμι) directly connects His identity with the eternal and unchanging God, a claim that is central to the Christian understanding of Jesus' nature as fully God and fully human. In John's Gospel, the statement "I am" not only reveals who Jesus is but also His role in God's plan of salvation.

The phrase ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς (ho artos tēs zōēs) - "the bread of life" according to Oyekan "ἄρτος (bread): bread is in the nominative masculine denoting potency and energy. Christ told us of the origin of this spiritual food; secondly, he proved what he had just said (v. 33). "The metaphor "bread of life" Gn. 6:35, 41, 48) denotes Jesus as the Son of God whose origin is in heaven and who took flesh and blood. Those who come to him believing in him (metaphorically "eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man" (Jn 6:51-58) will have the heavenly life both now and at the end-time" (Oyekan, 2021). Stemberger's "bread of life" metaphor highlights Jesus as the ultimate answer to spiritual hunger and thirst. This interpretation challenges contemporary readers to reflect on the temporary nature of earthly desires and to focus on the eternal spiritual nourishment that comes through trust in Christ (Stemberger, 2011).

This "Bread of Life" statement has deep meaning and is part of Jesus' broader teachings on eternal life and relationship with God. The description of "bread" is contained almost exclusively in chapter six, and almost all references to "bread" appear 21 times in that chapter. After chapter six, there are only three references to the use of "bread." It is not surprising that a major festival (Passover) mentioned in chapter 6:4 reveals possibly more theological than chronological considerations. Carson makes the connection of the depiction of Jesus as the "Bread of life" in John 6 to the Passover event is a motif in John's Gospel by arguing that "the connection becomes complex: the sacrifice of the lamb anticipates the death of Jesus, the manna in the Old Testament is replaced by the real bread of life, the exodus typology proclaims eternal life that frees us from sin and brokenness, the Passover celebration is taken over by the eucharist (both pointing to Jesus and his redemption on the crop" (Carson, 1991).

Jesus uses references to the gift of bread from heaven (verses 31,32) and His body as the bread He will give (vv. 51, 56-58). Thus, Jesus' statement that the Bread is His flesh, which He will "give for the life of the world," evokes the memory of the suffering Servant, who "lived unto death" and "bore the sin of many." Just as the scope of the servant is universal (Isa. 49:6), so Jesus gave His life not only for Israel but also for the world (John 6:51; band. 1:29, 36; parallel in John. 10:11, 15 bands. 11:51-52; 15:13; 17:19; 18:14). This is also stated by Nabor "in verses 22-51, Jesus premises the "Bread of Life Discourse" by comparing himself to the manna that came down from Heaven for the Jews to eat during their years in the wilderness. Verses 48-58 contain Jesus' difficult teaching that his followers must eat his flesh and drink his Bloodfield Field" (Nabor, 2018). Jesus begins his sermon on the "Bread of Life" by comparing himself to the manna that came down from Heaven for the Jews to eat during their years in the wilderness. The final verses of the chapter (verses 59-71) document the response of His

followers, with many choosing to abandon Jesus. Whereas according to Codrea, "this conversation of the manna and this bread was initiated by the people, but Jesus shows that manna, that bread was simply a foreshadowing, a partial image of the eternal Bread of Life to come. The manna given to the Israelites in the wilderness did not save them, they all tasted of death eventually. However, God has now sent Bread from heaven, and if they taste and eat of Him, they shall not die but have eternal life (6:49-50). There is required a decisive action from the people to take and eat" (Codrea, 2013). Jesus pointed out that the manna was only a shadow, a partial picture of the eternal "Bread of Life" to come. The manna given to the Israelites in the wilderness did not save them. However, God has now sent Bread from heaven, and if they eat it, they will not die but have eternal life (6:49-50). This is supported by Codrea's analysis that the manna is not bread and that He is the "bread of life" (6, 35). The content of the last part of the Eucharist (6, 53-59) can be summarized as: eating the Holy Eucharist, Christ abides in us, and we abide in Him. Three decisive elements of the fragment are analyzed: the Easter motif, the resemblance between Jesus and Moses, the prophet, and the eschatological hope. All this is projected on the Eucharistic background of the dialogue between Jesus and the crowds that surround him (Codrea, 2013). In this chapter, His followers witness the miracles of feeding the five thousand and walking on water, yet what Jesus asks of them is so problematic that many think it best to leave Him.

Jesus' listeners would have recognized His words as an echo of the "manna" from heaven that God provided for Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 16). Jesus pointed out that while the manna provided temporary food, He offered something greater: eternal food. Jesus is the true bread from heaven, which surpasses the manna in the wilderness by providing eternal life.

Jesus as the Passover Sacrifice

The reference to the Passover Feast in John 13:1 (compare John 2:13,23; 6:4; 11:55; 12:1) can be argued as a signal to readers of John's Gospel that the narrative should be understood in terms of Jesus' fulfillment of Passover symbolism. Jesus is depicted in John as celebrating the Passover meal with his closest followers shortly before his crucifixion. From this perspective, John reminds his readers of the Passover sacrifice in the Old Testament (Carson, 1991). Passover was the first of the three annual festivals in which the entire people of Israel were expected to come before the Almighty. Simultaneously, there was the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex 23:14-17). Both festivals are well-known and important in the Jewish tradition (Warouw, 2021).

Some scholars propose that the term "parakeet" in John 19:14 refers to the day before the Passover, the day on which preparations for the Passover were made. If so, John is suggesting that Jesus was executed at the time when the Passover lamb was slain in the temple. However, the Synoptics present Jesus and his disciples celebrating the Passover on the night before the crucifixion and use "parakeet" as referring to the day before the Sabbath (Mt 27:26; Mk 15:14; Lk 23:54). Thus, the term most likely refers to the day of preparation for the Sabbath. Thus, all four canonical Gospels agree that Jesus' Last Supper was a Passover meal that took place on Thursday evening (by Jewish reckoning, early Friday (Jeremias, 1996).

Jesus celebrating the Passover meal (John 13:1,4) with the twelve disciples is presented from the point of view of Passover symbolism in several ways, namely (1) the use of the "wine" imagery in 15:1-10 could be based on the disciples partaking of wine just before using this imagery at the Passover meal. (2) The connection and use of language in John 15-17 may refer back to the same terminology in the reference to Jesus as the "Lamb of God" in John 1:29. (3) His "glory" as the suffering Servant, who will be "lifted and glorified" (Isa 52:13) and who will "astonish many nations" (Isa 52:15). The Servant who "bore our griefs" and was "wounded for our transgressions" (Isa. 53:4-5); "whose punishment brought us to peace, and by whose wounds we were healed" (Isa. 53:5), "he was led like a lamb to the slaughter" (Isa. 53:7), but "after he has suffered, he will see the light of life" (Isa. 53:11 (Kostenberger, 2009).

The last Passover meal that Jesus celebrates with His disciples in John 13-17 is a pivotal moment in the Gospel of John. The Last Supper symbolizes the new covenant through Jesus' sacrifice. As the fulfillment of the Passover lamb, Jesus' death on the cross brought deliverance from sin, just as the Passover lamb brought physical deliverance in the Old Testament. While celebrating the Passover and the Last Supper with His disciples, Jesus began what has come to be known as a worship celebration that always commemorates His saving work through His death, burial, and resurrection. As we trace this progression from the Last Supper to the Lord's Supper, we must emphasize that the original context of the Eucharist was a true banquet in which Jesus hosted both the body and the spirit (Smither., 2021).

In John's Gospel, Jesus is depicted as the ultimate fulfillment of the Passover sacrifice, linking his crucifixion to the sacrificial practices at the core of Jewish tradition. This theme is woven into John's narrative through various allusions and explicit references that describe Jesus as "the Lamb of God," suggesting that his death has salvific significance for humanity, much like the role of the Passover lamb for the Israelites during the Exodus. In Jesus' death, as defined by the Old Testament quotation, the Old Testament fulfillment motif and the Passover theme are convergent. Ripley explains John's Chronology reinforces this framework by depicting Jesus' crucifixion as occurring at the same time as the slaughter of the Passover lamb in the Temple (John 19:14),¹⁴ which is the culmination of a recurring Passover motif that invites an understanding of sacrifice that aligns with the Passover's broader message of liberation. However, sacrifices (sheep or goats) for Passover (Ripley, 2020).

Jesus is symbolically presented as the Passover lamb, whose sacrifice brings salvation, which is in line with the Jewish Passover tradition. John's depiction suggests that Jesus' crucifixion was the fulfillment of the Passover sacrifice. According to Christensen, John provides an additional narrative in 18:32b, stating that Jesus' impending Roman execution fulfills his prediction of Jesus' rapture (12:32-33). This connection is evident from the repetition of the phrase *σημαίνων ποίῳ θανάτῳ ἡμελλεν ἀποθνήσκειν* (which indicates the type of death he will experience) from 12:33. This literary connection aims to help readers remember Isaiah's allusion to the Servant in words about Jesus' rapture (3:14; 8:28; 12:32) (Christensen, 2023). The concept of Jesus as the Passover Lamb in John's Gospel is a fundamental theological point that reflects how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament Passover narrative. According to Lee, the primary association for John is the Passover, which dominates the Passion narrative in John's Gospel. Passover is the most important festival in the Gospel (2:13, 23; 6:4; 11:55; 12:1; 13:1; 18:28, 39; 19:14). At the same time, John the Baptist's description of Jesus taking away the sin

of the world opens up the Lamb symbolism to other Old Testament figurative meaning field field (Lee, 2023). However, John describes Jesus not only as a sacrificial lamb but also as the ultimate savior from sin and eternal death. This is a significant extension of the original Passover lamb, which brought temporary deliverance during the Exodus era.

When the soldiers came to Jesus and saw that He was dead, they did not break His legs, but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once, blood and water came out (John 19:34). After Jesus breathed his last, his legs were not broken which refers to the fulfillment of the Old Testament Passover symbolism. Keener draws attention to John's explicit statement that Jesus' bones were not broken during the crucifixion (John 19:33-36). He connects this to the requirement that the bones of the Passover lamb remain unbroken (Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12), further establishing Jesus as the fulfillment of the Passover lamb image (Keener, 2010). Jesus not only avoided having his legs broken (unlike those who were crucified with him), but his body was pierced by spears and suffered no bone damage. The meaning of the unbroken leg is highlighted a little later in the Bible quote in 19:36, which discusses the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:46): "These things happened that it might be fulfilled which is written in the Scriptures: 'Not one of His bones will be broken.'" Here, finally, the reader will learn why John the Baptist twice referred to Jesus as "the Lamb of God" (1:29-30) (Syreeni, 2024).

Thus, the Old Testament fulfillments, Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12, stipulate that no bones of the Passover lamb be broken. The reference to unbroken bones in Exodus 12:46 appears in the context of the requirements for the observance of the Passover festival. No one of the sacrificial animals was to be broken, among other things, as a symbol of the unity of family worship and the entire Covenant community. This passage is the conclusion of the Exodus story, which began concerning slavery in Egypt and then the call of Moses in Exodus chapters 1-4.

Theological Meaning

To understand the theological significance of the image of Jesus as the symbolic fulfillment of the celebration of salvation can be traced in John's narrative, referring to Jesus as "the Lamb of God," he is probably referring to the provision of the Lamb by God (John 1, 29, 36; cf. Gen 22, 8). Jesus is the Lamb provided by God; the use of the word 'God's' (τοῦ θεοῦ) refers to ownership, and therefore, we should understand John's statement as a reference to Jesus' divine origin. One study from Polylinguality and Transcultural Practices investigated the meaning of the metaphor "Lamb of God" in various translations of John's Gospel. The study emphasizes the complexity of the concept, taking into account its theological weight and symbolic meaning, especially as a metaphor bridging the Jewish sacrificial tradition and early Christian soteriology (I.A, 2023).

The theological significance of Jesus as the fulfillment of the Feast of Salvation (or Jewish feasts more broadly) is rich and multifaceted, grounded in the portrayal of Jesus as the Messiah who embodies and completes the symbolism of the Old Testament feasts. This contribution explains how John the Baptist's statement in John 1:29 shapes the theological trajectory of the Gospel, with echoes of the Passover and Servant in Isaiah shaping the narrative

of Jesus' passion and sacrificial death (Cha, 2024). This interpretation not only highlights John's distinctive Christology but also reinforces the broader Christian understanding of Jesus' death as the fulfillment of the Passover, symbolizing redemption and final victory over evil.

Salvation

Celebrations of salvation collectively point to Jesus' mission, which underscores His role as Redeemer. Jesus gave new meaning from a mere religious ritual to a living experience of salvation, hope, and eternal life for believers. The depiction of Jesus as the Passover lamb has profound theological implications, incorporating themes of liberation, sacrifice, and penance. The Gospel of John aligns Jesus' crucifixion with the timing of the Passover sacrifice, which is particularly symbolized in verses such as John 1:29, where Jesus is referred to as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." This image evokes the understanding of the Passover lamb from the Exodus, whose blood protected the Israelites from death and positions Jesus as the supreme sacrifice that frees believers from sin and spiritual death. Just as the blood of the lamb saved the Israelites from the plague, Jesus' sacrificial death saved believers from sin and eternal death, providing a new covenant of salvation (Keener, 2010). The use of "Lamb of God" emphasizes that Jesus' role is to bring spiritual deliverance to those who follow him, just as the Passover lamb brought physical deliverance to the Israelites. This typology also reflects Jesus' role in cosmic redemption through His sacrifice, He triumphed over sin and evil, providing salvation and victory to His followers.

New Easter

For Christians, Holy Communion is the new Passover, and the sacrifice is Christ Himself. His body and blood are offered as a means of atonement for sin. Christ's death represents the forgiveness of sins. In the present context, two propositions: (a) Christ is the Passover lamb, and (b) Christ bears or takes away sin.

Many scholars see this passage as a reference to Holy Communion, where the bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of Jesus. Although John's Gospel does not contain a formal Last Supper narrative, the "Bread of Life" discourse resonates with the theme of communion, implying an invitation to partake in an ongoing and real relationship with Jesus through faith and remembrance (Lee, 2023). The interpretation of the Eucharist (the Lord's Supper) reflects the early Christian understanding that Jesus' sacrifice is an ongoing source of spiritual nourishment.

By calling Himself the bread of life, Jesus positions Himself as the ultimate source of spiritual fulfillment. Just as physical bread sustains physical life, Jesus provides what is needed for eternal life. This image also symbolizes his willingness to be broken and shared, which signifies his crucifixion and the establishment of the Eucharist in the Christian tradition (Koester, 2021). The proclamation of Jesus as the "Bread of Life" in the Gospel of John invites believers to accept Him as the source of spiritual food and eternal life. Through faith, His followers are called to "consume" Jesus' teachings and love, realizing the transformative life He offers. This image goes beyond mere physical nourishment and points to a harmonious relationship with God, which can only be achieved through Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

Jesus Christ serves as the ultimate fulfillment of the symbolic meaning behind the various festivals and feasts celebrated in the Old Testament, especially those related to salvation. The image of the lamb as a sacrifice parallels the role of the Passover lamb, which fulfills the symbolic meaning of God's salvation. In the context of the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), people would remember God's supply of manna during the Exodus. Jesus used this symbolism in John 6 when He declared, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). Connecting the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus to the deeper spiritual meaning of feasts like Passover and other feasts that illustrate God's plan for redemption. The feasts mark moments of divine intervention in history, such as the deliverance from Egypt (Passover) and the provision of bread from heaven (Manna). Jesus is presented as the fulfillment of these feasts.

This research uses a descriptive method that focuses on theological inquiry and explores the festivals as not simply historical events but pointing to a greater future reality found in Jesus. By fulfilling the symbolic elements of these festivals, Jesus becomes the ultimate "Feast of Salvation" for humanity. Jesus' participation in and reinterpretation of this feast day (especially during His last supper, which was the Passover meal) shows how He fulfilled its deeper spiritual meaning by representing His own body and blood, which signified the new covenant of salvation. Jesus' death and resurrection fulfill the Old Testament promises of salvation. In this sense, the festivals are not mere commemorations of past events but prophetic markers that find their ultimate meaning in Christ.

This explanation helps Christians understand how Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament, connecting Jewish tradition and Christian theology. It bridges the gap between the Old and New Testaments and shows how God's redemptive plan unfolds throughout history. Recognizing Jesus as the fulfillment of the feasts deepens the spiritual and liturgical meaning of Christian practices, especially during periods such as Easter and holy communion, which echo themes of sacrifice and salvation.

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