

THE LAMB*

Jesus is the willing, spotless, sacrifice who fulfills the symbol of the Old Covenant sacrificial system.

SCRIPTURE†	MUSIC‡
Exodus 12:1-28 Exodus 12:12-13 Isaiah 53 Psalm 22 Matthew 25:26-46; 27:1-25 Luke 23:27-56 John 1:29-34; 19:1-42 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2:21-24 Revelation 5:6-14	And Can It Be Arise, My Soul, Arise Arise, My Soul, Arise (Forrest) SATB Behold the Lamb of God (Courtney) SATB Crown Him with Many Crowns Lamb of Glory My Faith Looks Up to Thee O Sacred Head, Now Wounded Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted The Lamb (Hayes) SATB The Power of the Cross There Is a Fountain When I Survey the Wondrous Cross Who Is the Lamb? (Larson) SATB



NORTHWEST VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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* Theme corresponds well to the Sunday before **Memorial Day**.

† Daily preparatory readings shown in **bold**.

‡ Published choral and vocal music shown in **bold**.

PRESENTING & PROMOTING THIS THEME

OLD AND NEW COVENANTS

Contrast the Old and New Covenants as they relate to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.” We hear these words of John the Baptist and automatically translate: the “Lamb” of God is Jesus. It’s easy to forget that this term for the Son of God is an analogy—but an analogy God has chosen for His Son.

About 400 years after the sons of Jacob seek refuge in Egypt from famine, God leads their descendants out with a mighty hand and establishes a covenant with them. To seal this covenant, Moses sheds animal blood and sprinkles it upon the people. But out of this covenant flows a long line of ritual animal sacrifices in the Tabernacle and Temple—thousands of lambs without blemish shed their blood to cover the sins of the people.

And then, after a time in exile, the remnant of God’s covenant people settle again in Jerusalem. Temple sacrifices resume. Shepherds from a small village outside Jerusalem supply lambs for sacrifice. And then the last sacrificial Lamb is born there, too, though few notice His coming.

The Son of God has come to atone for the sins of all mankind. The prophet heralds Him, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away this sins of the world!” And He, the Lamb without blemish, meets His death. The Old Covenant is fulfilled and the New Covenant begins: in this shed blood of the Lamb we find forgiveness of our sins.

But does Jesus’ title end there? Now that He has died and rose, what is He now called? Jesus keeps His title. In Revelation, He is still called the “Lamb slain.” For all eternity He will be praised for His work on the cross, and we will be reminded of His sacrifice for our salvation.

Today we affirm Revelation 5:12: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” (Caleb French)

THE FIRST PASSOVER

Explore the first Passover experience as it relates to Jesus fulfilling its image in His Lamb role.

The Old Testament book of Exodus records the powerful account of the first Passover. The Israelites had witnessed nine horrible plagues on the Egyptians. Blood, suffering, and death had surrounded them. Then the word of God came again: One more plague was coming, and to escape its consequences, more death was necessary. Kill a perfect lamb and apply its blood to the door posts of each house. The price of disobedience was unthinkably high – the life of every firstborn, both man and animal.

There were likely different reactions to God's command. Some who obeyed were probably fearful; they had seen the many plagues on Egypt. Could the blood of a lamb really save them from a similar fate? Others may have been confident. God had protected them so far, and He would do so again. As night fell and the Israelites waited, the angel of death visited each Egyptian household. Screams shattered the silence of the night until the whole land was filled with crying; not one house was left untouched by the death of a family member. But God's people, who had believed Him and applied the blood to the door posts, were passed over by the death angel. Their obedience served as a demonstration of their faith, and it was a remarkable faith. To trust fully that the blood would protect them from the angel of death seems almost foolhardy, but what else could they have done?

Because Jesus, the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world, has come, we no longer need to kill an animal and put its blood on our houses. But we do need to exercise faith in the work of God's Lamb. And like the Israelites on that first Passover night, our faith springs from the desperation we experience when we realize that there is nothing we can do for ourselves. We must simply depend on God. The Lamb, Jesus, stands between you and death. He is your only hope, and there is a way to be saved. Are you depending? [\(Amy Tilson\)](#)

LAMB OF HEAVEN

Look at the portrait of Christ as the Lamb in Heaven. This symbol and title is not just an image of frailty and sacrifice but is now what brings the Son of God glory and majesty in Heaven.

[Ancient lambs slain in sacrifice pointed to Jesus. When He came in the flesh, the Son of God was called “the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world.” It’s one of the most common names of Jesus in Scripture. What we may not have expected is that the name which brings to mind Jesus’ sacrifice stays with Him—forever. In the last book of our Bibles, John receives a vision of the glory of Jesus Christ in heaven. And how does He appear? What is He called? The Lamb.]^s

Four angelic creatures surround the throne blazing with light. On the throne is not the figure of a king, but of a lamb who appears to have been slain. Twenty-four elders of the people of God fall down before this Lamb, and with harps they praise Him. “You are worthy to open the scroll,” they cry, worthy to bring about God’s end to human history, “for you were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation—and have made us kings and priests to God!”

But though the song begins twenty-four voices strong, hear thousands upon thousands take up the theme: “Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, blessing!” The shout of song rises. And it spreads. Now every creature in sky and sea and land joins the chorus of the universe, crying “Blessing! Honor! Glory! Power be to Him who sits on the throne—to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

How can we not join this theme today? The Lamb of heaven laid down His life for us. He has brought into the presence of God a host of millions, bought by His blood and worthy now to dwell and reign with Him as His kings and priests. How can we not lift our voices? How can we not join the chorus to worship the Lamb of Heaven—today!?

^s This paragraph is optional, to set the context.

PASSOVER FIRST-HAND

Depict the first Passover through the eyes of a first-hand imaginative account.

It's Passover time again. I love this time of the year, stopping to remember God's miraculous deliverance of our fathers in Egypt so many years ago, teaching our children about the sacrifice and the miracles, about Jehovah. But I have to admit that I've been trying not to think about the lamb. I've always felt that little twinge of sadness about the sacrifices – after all, something innocent has to die for our transgressions. But now, with the children getting older, it's even worse. They know the lamb is for the sacrifice, but it seems like they can't help getting attached to it. We have to bring it into the house, you know—only for a few days, but it doesn't take long before they're treating it like a pet! Why, last night I almost tripped over the little thing lying right next to Leah's bed on the floor. And I'm almost certain that Reuben has been trying to feed it under the table when he thinks we don't see. This year, we're making the trip to Jerusalem for Passover, so of course the lamb will travel with us, prolonging the attachment and making it that much harder. I dread seeing the tears in my children's eyes when we take that little lamb to the temple.

But something else has made me think more about the lamb this year. Just a couple of weeks ago, our rabbi was explaining what he had been studying from the prophet Isaiah. I'm not sure that I understand it all myself, but I remember just what he said: "Messiah will be God's Lamb." Our longed-for Messiah – like a sacrificial lamb? It makes me look at that little animal in the corner in a different light, that's for sure. So maybe I don't need to be thinking about the lamb less. Maybe I actually need to be thinking about Him more. (Amy Tilson)