



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

APRIL 2019

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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April 2019

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Let us keep the feast

In his letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul declared that ‘Christ, *our Passover*, was sacrificed for us’. **1Co 5:7**. The fulfilment of the Passover feast included Christ’s journey from the first communion meal with His disciples, all the way to His physical resurrection in an immortal and incorruptible body. We recall that the Feast of Passover included the Passover meal, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits. **Lev 23:4-14**. The offering of Christ fulfilled each of these elements of the Passover. Christ is the true Passover Lamb, the Unleavened Bread, and the Firstfruits of all those who die in Him. **1Co 15:20**.

Christ is our Passover, and He has been sacrificed for us. However, we must join Christ in the fulfilment of each element of the Passover feast. Having said that Christ is our Passover, Paul continued, ‘Therefore *let us keep the feast*, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.’ **1Co 5:8**. The *first element* of the Feast of Passover was the Passover meal. We keep this element of the Passover feast when we eat and drink the communion meal in the New Covenant. The communion meal is *a participation* in the body and blood of Christ. **1Co 10:16**.

The Passover is the focal point of our ongoing participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians is focused on the importance of Passover, and the need to keep this feast in the New Covenant. **1Co 5:8**. We are born as sons of God and clothed with our priestly garments in the Feast of Passover; not in the Feast of Pentecost or the Feast of Tabernacles. It is important for every Christian to recognise, and appreciate, this reality. If we fail to keep the Feast of Passover, we will be unable to participate in the fulfilment of the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles.

FURTHER STUDY: LEVITICUS 23:4-14

Three elements of Passover

The blood of Christ, our Passover, is a treasure that ransoms and redeems us from the power of sin and death. **1Pe 1:18-19. Mat 20:28.** In the first Passover, the whole nation of Israel, whom God called *His firstborn son*, was released from their captivity in Egypt. **Exo 4:22.** We are delivered from the judgement of the world, and we are *born* as sons of God, in the Feast of Passover. We are born from the dead, with Christ, in the fellowship of the sin offering. **Isa 53:10-11.**

The *second element* of the Feast of Passover was the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The nation of Israel was required to purge leaven from their houses and then eat unleavened bread for a period of seven days. Moses described this unleavened bread as 'the bread of affliction'. **Deu 16:3.** It reveals that there is a process for the circumcision of the other law from our hearts, and the removal of sin from our lives, as we participate in the sufferings and afflictions of Christ. **Col 2:11.** The 'seven days' of this feast represent a 'whole of life process' in which we are purging leaven from our lives and from our households. **Lev 23:6.**

The *third element* of the Feast of Passover was the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits. On the day after the Sabbath, which fell during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a sheaf of the firstfruits of the harvest was to be waved before the Lord. **Lev 23:10-11.** Christ fulfilled the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits when He was raised from the dead after three days and three nights. We know that Jesus was raised on the day after the weekly Sabbath. He presented Himself to the Father as the Firstfruits of all those who die in Him. **Joh 20:17.** Jesus said that if we eat His flesh and drink His blood, He will raise us up on the last day. **Joh 6:54. Php 3:20-21. 1Co 15:53-54.**

The first Passover

The *first Passover* meal was celebrated by the nation of Israel on the night before they were delivered from their bondage in the land of Egypt. The Lord instructed Moses that this would be the beginning of months for them. **Exo 12:2.** On the tenth day of this month, the head of every house needed to take a lamb for his household. **Exo 12:3.** If the household was too small to eat a whole lamb, they were able to share a lamb between households. **Exo 12:4.** The most significant feature of the first Passover was that the head of each household applied the blood of the lamb to the doorposts and lintel of his house. **Exo 12:7.**

We learn some important lessons when we consider the detail of the first Passover in Egypt. Firstly, the Passover was a *farewell dinner* from Egypt. The Lord instructed the Israelites to eat the Passover in a state of readiness. They needed to be fully dressed, with their sandals on their feet and their staffs in their hands. **Exo 12:11.** The first Passover was to be a joyful occasion. It was a night of deliverance from bondage and slavery. In the same way, we eat and drink the communion in the faith that the Lord is delivering us from the death of sin and the culture of the world.

Secondly, the Israelites received the strength for one day's journey from the Passover meal. They were not permitted to salt any of the meat and take it with them! If any of the meat was left until the morning, it needed to be burned with fire. **Exo 12:10.** This ensured that the Israelites were reliant upon the Lord for their daily provision. We observe this same principle of *daily provision* in relation to the manna that fell from heaven in the wilderness. **Exo 16:15-19.** In the same way, the weekly communion meal strengthens us for our daily participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

FURTHER STUDY: EXODUS 12:1-28

The midnight hour

The major lesson of the first Passover in Egypt is that there is a midnight hour! The head of every household needed to use hyssop to apply the blood of the lamb to the doorposts and lintel of his house. The Lord said to Moses, 'I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgements.' **Exo 12:12**. He concluded this statement by saying, 'I Am Yahweh.' We know that this was the Son who was speaking to Moses. The midnight hour was an expression of His judgement upon the world as I AM.

The Lord said to Moses, 'The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood *I will pass over you*, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.' **Exo 12:13**. The name of the Feast of Passover is derived from this statement of the Lord's – '*I will pass over you*'. Moses further explained to the Israelites, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He *struck* the Egyptians and *delivered* our households.' **Exo 12:27**. In this regard, the Passover included a *great deliverance*, and a *great judgement*. This is an important point. The cross is a place of deliverance and judgement.

At the midnight hour, the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. This included the firstborn in every family, all the way to the firstborn in Pharaoh's own house. **Exo 12:29**. The outcome of this judgement was that 'a great cry' was heard throughout all the land of Egypt. **Exo 12:30**. The sorrow of Egypt was a harbinger of the weeping and gnashing of teeth that every unbeliever will experience in the lake of fire, for eternity. **Mat 24:51**.

The ordinance of Passover

Moses instructed the Israelites to keep the Feast of Passover at the same time each year 'as an ordinance for you and your children forever'. **Exo 12:24**. The nation of Israel celebrated the *first Passover* in their houses in Egypt. However, once they had entered the Promised Land, the Israelites were required to celebrate the Passover feast in the place where the Lord chose to place His name. Moses instructed the people, 'You shall sacrifice the Passover to the Lord your God, from the flock and from the herd, in the place where the Lord chooses to put His name.' **Deu 16:2**. The Lord placed His name in the tabernacle of Moses, and later, in the temple that was built in Jerusalem. He said to Solomon, concerning the temple, 'I have consecrated this house which you have built *to put My name* there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.' **1Ki 9:3**.

The Passover feast was still the provision of the Lord for every house. However, the people could not sacrifice, or eat, the Passover in their houses. Moses emphasised this, by saying, 'You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which the Lord your God gives you; but at the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide ... *you shall roast and eat it* in the place which the Lord your God chooses, and in the morning you shall turn and *go to your tents*.' **Deu 16:5-7**. The Passover was not the initiative of a person's house. It was the Lord's initiative to invite every household to join a house to house fellowship. This fellowship was *on the holy ground* of the name of Yahweh, not on the ground of an individual's house. The Passover Lamb is the Lamb *for the Father's house*.

FURTHER STUDY: 2 CHRONICLES 30

The meaning of the Passover Lamb

Before the foundation of the world, Christ offered Himself to the Father to become the Father's offering and provision for many sons. We recall that Abraham had faith for this provision. On the way to Mount Moriah, he said to Isaac, 'God will provide for Himself a lamb'. **Gen 22:8**. Abraham was specifically referring to the Passover Lamb *as a burnt offering*. The burnt offering reveals the fellowship of Yahweh in the offering of Christ. It is called '*Yahweh's Passover*' for this reason. **Exo 12:11. Lev 23:5**. It reveals the offering of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the fellowship of Yahweh, to multiply Their life and include us in Their fellowship. It is the Passover Lamb *as a burnt offering* that enables the families of the earth to be blessed, in Christ, with the life and grace of God. **Gen 22:18**.

Further to this, the Lord explained to Abraham that his descendants would spend four hundred years in captivity in the land of Egypt. He declared that, after this time, the nation of Egypt would be judged, and his descendants would be delivered from their captivity with great possessions. **Gen 15:13-14**. As we have considered, they were delivered from the judgement of Egypt by the blood of the Passover Lamb. This deliverance, and judgement, revealed that the Passover Lamb is also *a sin offering*. **Isa 53:10**.

The communion meal grants us a participation in the offering of Christ, who is the Passover Lamb. **1Co 10:16**. He is both the burnt offering and the sin offering. The outcome of our participation in the fellowship of the burnt offering is *blessing*. It is access to the grace in the fellowship of Yahweh. The outcome of our participation in the fellowship of the sin offering is *redemption and new birth*. It is our participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering, as both the burnt offering and the sin offering, that *ministers peace* to our lives and our families.

Behold the Lamb

We do not understand the significance of the Passover Lamb as a burnt offering, sin offering, and peace offering, by studying the instructions concerning the Passover feast in the Law Covenant alone. It is helpful to remember that Abraham's faith toward the provision of the Passover Lamb, and the deliverance of the nation of Israel by the blood of the Passover Lamb, both *predated* the Law Covenant. In this regard, the significance of the Passover was established *before* the nation of Israel received the Law Covenant at Mount Sinai. The Lord was not relying on the types and shadows of the Law Covenant to convey the substance of Passover. Moses declared that it was the responsibility of *the elders of Israel* to explain the real meaning of the Passover to each generation. **Exo 12:26-27.**

The significance of Christ as the Passover Lamb was also explained by prophets, such as Isaiah. **Isa 53:7.** The greatest of all the prophets was John the Baptist. When John saw Jesus approaching him, he proclaimed, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' **Joh 1:29.** In this way, he proclaimed that the Passover Lamb is *a sin offering*. On the next day, John the Baptist observed Jesus walking, and said to his disciples, 'Behold the Lamb of God!' **Joh 1:36.** In this way, he proclaimed that the Passover Lamb is also *a burnt offering*. The mandate of John the Baptist was to go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways. **Luk 1:76.** In this regard, he was a messenger of peace who had been sent to 'guide our feet into *the way of peace*'. **Luk 1:79.**

A household, that has the blood of the Passover Lamb applied on the doorposts and lintel of their house, is *a house of peace*. **Luk 10:5-6.** In his letter to the Colossians, the apostle Paul declared that Christ has 'made peace through the blood of His cross'. **Col 1:20.**

FURTHER STUDY: 1 PETER 1

The Shepherd of the sheep

John the Baptist proclaimed that Jesus is the Passover Lamb. He is also our great High Priest and the great Shepherd of the sheep. He is Melchizedek – both King and Priest. Even though the Lord did not introduce Himself as a Shepherd to the nation of Israel, the Psalms and the prophetic Scriptures highlight that He was a Shepherd who was leading His flock out of Egypt and through the wilderness. The psalmist proclaimed, 'He made His own people go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.' **Psa 78:52**. Likewise, the psalmist said, 'We are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice.' **Psa 95:7**. This refers to the voice of Christ as the great Shepherd of the sheep.

Jesus said, concerning a shepherd, 'He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.' **Joh 10:3-4**. When the disciples did not understand what He was talking about, Jesus explained that He was the good Shepherd. He said, 'I am the good Shepherd; and the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.' **Joh 10:11**. Likewise, He said, 'I am the good Shepherd, and I know My own [sheep] and My own know Me ... I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will *hear My voice*; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.' **Joh 10:14,16**.

Jesus was fully revealed to be the great Shepherd, when He laid down His life for the sheep, from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul proclaimed that the God of peace 'brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, *the great Shepherd of the sheep*, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.' **Heb 13:20**.

Replacing the synagogues

In the early phase of His ministry, Jesus recognised the legitimacy of the Jewish synagogues. **Mat 9:35**. At that time, the synagogues were the sheepfold of Israel. Jesus taught in the synagogues because, 'seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them because they were *distressed* and *downcast* like sheep without a shepherd'. **Mat 9:36**.

In the synagogue of His home town, in Nazareth, Jesus announced that He was the Shepherd-King who had come to set free those sheep who were distressed and downcast. He stood up, and read from the book of Isaiah, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord.' **Luk 4:18-19**. It is significant that Jesus first proclaimed that He was the Christ in a synagogue. However, the synagogues lost their validity as the sheepfold in Israel when the leaders resolved that any person, who confessed that Jesus was the Christ, would be cast out. **Joh 9:22**.

The leaders of the synagogues were the doorkeepers, who should have heard the voice of Christ, and recognised that He was the good Shepherd of the sheep. **Joh 10:3**. Jesus had come to give sight to all who were blind – including the Pharisees. However, the Pharisees were unwilling to accept their spiritual blindness and, therefore, could not receive spiritual sight. **Joh 9:40-41**. The evidence of their spiritual blindness was revealed by the way that they cast the blind man, who had been healed by Jesus, out of the synagogue. **Joh 9:34**. This healed man had become a sheep without a sheepfold. However, he was no longer a sheep without a shepherd. Jesus personally found him, and placed him within the care and protection of *the new sheepfold* that He was establishing in Israel. **Joh 9:35-38**.

FURTHER STUDY: JOHN 9

The new sheepfold

Jesus replaced the synagogues with a house to house fellowship throughout the nation of Israel. He began to establish this *new sheepfold* in Israel by sending the twelve disciples to look for worthy houses. He sent them to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. **Mat 10:6**. In sending the disciples to look for *lost sheep*, Jesus was beginning to train the twelve disciples as under-shepherds who would later become an apostolic administration in the church. **Mat 10:11-13**.

Jesus also sent another seventy disciples as labourers into the harvest. **Luk 10:1-2**. In contrast to the twelve, He did not send the seventy as under-shepherds who were looking for sheep. Jesus sent the seventy as 'lambs in the midst of wolves'. **Luk 10:3**. When we compare the mode of the twelve and the seventy, we observe the distinction between the work of an apostolic administration and the work of elders and deacons within a presbytery. However, in terms of ministering the gospel of peace, Jesus gave similar instructions to both the twelve and the seventy. **Luk 10:5-6**.

The Gospel of Luke records that Jesus sent the seventy disciples 'in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come'. **Luk 10:1**. It is evident that Jesus sent them to specific places. He used the twelve and the seventy to establish a strategic network of worthy houses throughout the whole nation of Israel. These worthy houses were firstfruit houses because they had received Christ and His word. When Jesus came to a certain town, or village, He would stay in one of these worthy houses. He would minister to those in the household, in a fellowship of giving and receiving, as they expressed care and hospitality toward Him. At times, Jesus would use the house as a place of retreat, rest and refreshing. At other times, He would use the house as a base for His ministry into the surrounding region.

The anointing of Jesus in Bethany

The house of Simon the leper was an important part of this house to house fellowship in the nation of Israel. **Mar 14:3**. Simon's house was in a town called Bethany, which was only a short walking distance from Jerusalem. It is likely that Simon was healed by Jesus during the early part of His ministry and then, later, found by one of the twelve disciples, or one of the seventy, to be a man of peace with a worthy house.

The Gospel of John identifies that the house of Simon was also the house of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. **Joh 12:1-3**. We know that Mary and Martha were sisters, and that Lazarus was their brother. It has been suggested by some that Simon was their father. It has been suggested by others that Simon was Martha's husband. The latter may be the more likely alternative. We recall that when Jesus visited their house, earlier in His ministry, it was Martha who 'welcomed Him into *her home*'. **Luk 10:38**. When we consider a harmony of the Gospel accounts, it suggests that it was Simon and Martha's home.

The house of Simon was a place of hospitality and ministry. In the week before the Passover, the family hosted a supper for Jesus and His disciples. John recorded that Martha was serving. **Joh 12:2**. She was willingly ministering to the needs of all those who had gathered to her home. This ministry of hospitality was an important part of the name and work that Martha had received from the Father through Christ. John also recorded that Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead by Jesus, was among those who reclined at the table. **Joh 12:2**. During the supper, Mary came to Jesus with an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, called 'spikenard'. She poured this oil upon His head. **Mat 26:7**. **Mar 14:3**. She also anointed His feet and wiped them with her hair. The whole house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. **Joh 12:3**.

FURTHER STUDY: JOHN 12

Anointed for His journey

When Mary had finished anointing Jesus with oil, Judas began to reprimand her, by saying, 'Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?' **Joh 12:5**. Jesus replied, 'Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand *to anoint My body for burial*.' **Mar 14:6-8**. It was God, the Father, who had given Mary the privilege of anointing Jesus for His offering. She anointed the physical body of Christ for His journey from the last supper, all the way to His physical resurrection from the grave to immortality.

The fragrant anointing oil ran from the head of Christ right down to the hem of His priestly garments. **Psa 133:2**. Jesus was anointed by Mary as both our great High Priest *and* our great Shepherd. He was anointed to fulfil His priestly and kingly ministry according to the order of Melchizedek. Jesus proceeded from this household with the aroma of the anointing oil upon His garments and His whole body. The same aroma, that filled the house of Simon in Bethany, remained on Him as He celebrated the first communion with His disciples in the upper room. The aroma of the anointing oil remained on His physical body all the way to His death on the cross. **2Co 2:16**. As Jesus made His way from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross, His body was covered with His blood and with the anointing oil.

Speaking of the name of Yahweh, the Scriptures proclaim, 'Your name is ointment poured forth'. **Son 1:3**. Another translation says, 'Your name is like purified oil'. **Son 1:3 NASB**. Having been anointed by the Father to offer Himself for our sake, the name of the Son as 'I AM' was revealed in each wounding event.

FURTHER STUDY: JOHN 19

The first communion meal

Soon after He was anointed in Bethany, Jesus instructed His disciples to prepare the Passover meal in Jerusalem. **Luk 22:8-12**. When Jesus sat down with His disciples in the upper room, He said to them, 'With fervent desire, I have desired to eat *this Passover* with you before I suffer.' **Luk 22:15**. The *first Passover* was celebrated by the Israelites in the land of Egypt. The *last Passover* was celebrated by Jesus and His disciples in Jerusalem in an upper room. This was the end of the ordinance of the Passover with all its sacrificial lambs, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. From that time onwards, the sacrifice of any lamb for a Passover meal was an abomination to God and an offence to Christ. **Isa 66:3**. It is an offence to Christ because He is the true Passover Lamb. **1Co 5:7**.

Jesus celebrated the *last Passover* meal with His disciples. However, more significantly, He inaugurated the *first communion meal*. It was the disciples who prepared the lamb for the last Passover. It was God, the Father, who prepared Christ to be the Lamb for the first communion. The shift from Passover to communion took place when Christ made the Passover meal a *participation*, or *communion*, in His own person and life. In Egypt, the first Passover provided protection for the firstborn of Israel, from death at the hand of the Lord through His angel. It was also a celebration meal to commemorate their deliverance from bondage and slavery to the Egyptians. The communion meal is more than this. It signifies that we have become members of Christ's own body, and participants in the New Covenant that He has made with us in His own blood.

Jesus said, concerning the bread, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' **Luk 22:19**. Jesus said, concerning the cup, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.' **Luk 22:20**.

FURTHER STUDY: LUKE 22

Lamb and Shepherd

Jesus invited the disciples to join the fellowship of the New Covenant in the communion meal. The New Covenant was then inaugurated through the seven wounding events that Jesus experienced during His journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. These wounding events caused His blood to be sprinkled 'seven times' upon His physical body.

During the first communion service, Jesus revealed that He was the Lamb of God. He also declared that He was the great Shepherd of the sheep. The disciples were sheep who were part of His flock. Addressing His disciples as sheep, Jesus said, 'All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: "I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered"'. **Mat 26:31. Mar 14:27.** Jesus was quoting from the prophecies of Zechariah. We read in the book of Zechariah, "Awake. O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion", says the Lord of hosts, "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; then I will turn My hand against the little ones". **Zec 13:7.**

This verse may be translated, 'I will turn My hand against the little ones', or 'I will return My hand on the little ones'. **Zec 13:7.** It shows that there are *two sides* to this action of the Father's hand. **Isa 1:25. Amo 1:8.** It is the promise of judgement for those who reject Christ as the Shepherd, and the promise of comfort and protection for those who belong to Christ's sheepfold. The sheep who belong to Christ are 'little ones' who are meek and humble. **Zep 3:12. Mat 11:29.** Jesus addressed His disciples as 'little ones', when He said to them, 'Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom'. **Luk 12:32.**

The prayer of Jesus

Jesus went from the first communion service to the Mount of Olives to pray. He prayed for all those whom the Father had given to Him out of the world. **Joh 17:9**. He was referring to the sheep who belonged to His sheepfold. This included the disciples, and all those who belonged to the house to house fellowship that He had established during His ministry.

When Jesus prayed for the sheep who belonged to His sheepfold, He was acutely aware that the midnight hour was approaching, and that a thief was coming. Satan had entered Judas at the last supper, and was coming to steal, kill and destroy the sheep. **Joh 13:27**. Jesus knew that He would be struck down as the great Shepherd, so that His sheep would be scattered. He prayed that the Father would keep the sheep from the evil one, so that they would not be lost and destroyed. **Joh 17:15**. Jesus prayed for His disciples. He also prayed for all the sheep who would be gathered into His sheepfold because of the word that will be proclaimed by His under-shepherds in each generation. **Joh 17:20**.

On the Mount of Olives, Jesus foresaw the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah, concerning the sheep from every nation of the world. Isaiah proclaimed, 'Surely these shall come from afar; Look! Those from the north and the west, and these from the land of Sinim.' **Isa 49:12**. The land of Sinim is the nation of China. There will be a multitude of sheep from every nation who will walk in the fellowship of Christ's offering to become part of His sheepfold. Isaiah said, 'They shall feed along the roads, and their pastures shall be on all desolate heights. They shall neither hunger nor thirst, neither heat nor sun shall strike them; For He who has mercy on them [the great Shepherd] will lead them, even by the springs of water He will guide them.' **Isa 49:10**.

FURTHER STUDY: JOHN 17

King and Priest

Before the foundation of the world, Yahweh the Son offered Himself to the Father's bosom to become the Father's Firstborn and the Lamb for the Father's house. **Php 2:6-7**. This was the expression of the Son's faith and initiative that proceeded from the covenant dialogue of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Son's offering toward the Father was a *priestly action* by the power of Eternal Spirit. Jesus said, 'For this reason the Father loves Me.' **Joh 10:17**.

In response to the Son's priestly initiative and offering, the Father *birthed* Yahweh the Son as the Son of God by His word. This birthing initiative of the Father was also by the power of Eternal Spirit. The Father declared, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' **Psa 2:7. Act 13:33. Heb 1:5. Heb 5:5**. Jesus referred to this word as 'the command' that He had received from the Father. **Joh 10:18**. As the Father's Firstborn Son, He became *the Shepherd-King*, and the Head of the nations. The Father committed the name of every foreknown son of God to Him. He was the Covenant Seed *in whom* every son was named. **Gal 3:16**. Furthermore, He was the Shepherd-King *through whom* every son would be called by name. **Joh 10:3,14**.

As the Shepherd-King, Jesus became our sin, and suffered our eternal judgement from Gethsemane to the cross. However, as the Priest, He continued to offer Himself as the Lamb of the burnt offering without spot to God. **Heb 9:14**. Furthermore, as the Lamb of God, the Father made Him to be *our sin offering*. **Isa 53:10**. We note this distinction between becoming our sin as the Shepherd, and becoming our sin offering as the Lamb of God. The blood of the Lamb of God was not corrupted by sin. It was the precious blood of Christ that redeemed and birthed a multitude of sons of God. **1Pe 1:19**. The blood was the *life of God*. It was the blood of the Everlasting Covenant. **Heb 13:20**.

The Last Adam

Christ, who is called the Last Adam, was the origin of man through creation. **1Co 15:45.** He preceded Adam in headship, and was the Lord of hosts ruling over creation. At the appointed time, He became a man through incarnation. **Gal 4:4.** Christ partook of our flesh and blood that was sourced in Adam. **Heb 2:14.** However, Adam was not His father because He did not derive His identity from Adam. God was His Father. Jesus came among us as Immanuel. **Mat 1:23.** He was I AM (Yahweh) in the flesh. Jesus testified that He came as the Shepherd of the sheep. **Joh 10:14.** As such, king David said of Christ, 'The Lord is my Shepherd.' **Psa 23:1.** As the Lord of glory, Christ was delivered by the predetermined purpose and foreknowledge of God to be crucified by the hands of wicked men. **Act 2:23. 1Co 2:8.** When He was lifted upon the cross, Christ became the head of the new creation as the Last Adam.

Before He suffered at the hands of godless men, Christ was *smitten by God* in the garden of Gethsemane. **Isa 53:4.** He was not smitten by God as the Priest or the Lamb. He was smitten by God as the Shepherd of the sheep. **Isa 53:4.** The prophet Isaiah declared, 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.' **Isa 53:6.** Our iniquity was laid upon Christ as *our great Shepherd*. Furthermore, as our great Shepherd, the Father made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us. This means that the full wrath and judgement of God upon our sin fell on Him. Isaiah continued, 'He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people [the sheep], He [the Shepherd] was stricken.' **Isa 53:8.**

FURTHER STUDY: HEBREWS 2

Delivered from so great a death

In the first case, Christ protected His sheep by suffering the judgement of God on our behalf. We could liken this to the mode of a shepherd who places himself between a predator, such as a lion or bear, and his flock of sheep. The shepherd places himself in harm's way for the sake of protecting the sheep. **Joh 10:11-12.** In this case, the roaring lion, or the thief, is Satan who seeks to steal, kill and destroy the sheep by bringing them into captivity to the fear of death. Christ's care for the sheep required Him to go to the place where we had been taken captive, so that 'through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil'. **Heb 2:14.** When Christ laid down His life for the sheep, the power of Satan, sin, and death were all destroyed.

Furthermore, it was necessary for the Father to strike Christ as the Shepherd, so that He could recover all the sheep in the place where they had been lost. To understand this point, it is helpful to remember that when the Son of God created man, He committed the seed of every human identity to Adam. **Gen 2:7.** When Adam fell, the whole human race was cut off from the life of God. **Gen 2:17.** In his letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul explained that 'in Adam *all die*'. **1Co 15:22.** The whole human race was *lost to God*. This was a hopeless predicament.

Christ went as our Shepherd, and entered the place of our judgement. There, the Father struck Him with the stroke of eternal judgement that was due to fall on us. **Isa 53:8.** Christ bore our punishment in His physical body as He went from Gethsemane and was hung on a tree; while at the same time, He gathered us up into His arms, carried us on His shoulders and rescued us from so great a peril of death. **2Co 1:10.**

The blood on the Door

The Gospel of Luke records that the sweat of Christ became like great clots of blood that covered His body and then fell to the ground. **Luk 22:44**. Christ died our death as the Shepherd, but it was His blood as the Lamb of God that brought Him back from the death of our sin as the great Shepherd of the sheep. Paul said that the God of peace 'brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant'. **Heb 13:20**. Significantly, Christ brought every sheep who hears His voice, and follows Him back from the death of sin, with Him. We are born again from the dead by the word of the Father, that is proclaimed by the Shepherd, and by the application of the blood of the Lamb as the sin offering.

When the blood of Christ fell like great clots to the ground, it signified that this phase of His offering was complete. This included His propitiatory work as our great High Priest. It also signified that the Father had finished applying the blood of Christ as the Passover Lamb to the door of His house. **Exo 12:23**. We know that Jesus Himself is the Door of the Father's house, which is also the sheepfold. We recall that Jesus said to the Jews, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, *I am the door of the sheep*'. **Joh 10:7**.

Following the fellowship of offering in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus could confidently proceed to the next stages of His offering in the knowledge that the sheep had been recovered and protected. As the great Shepherd of the sheep, Jesus said to the disciples, 'Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand'. **Mar 14:42**. When Jesus said, 'Let us be going', He knew that He was going to the cross and the disciples needed to go to their houses.

FURTHER STUDY: HEBREWS 9

The protection of the sheep

At the gate of the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked the hostile crowd, that wanted to arrest Him and His disciples, who they were looking for. They said that they were looking for 'Jesus the Nazarene'. When Jesus replied, 'I AM', the whole crowd drew back and fell to the ground. **Joh 18:4-6**. The power of His testimony, literally, knocked every one of them onto their backs. The proclamation of His name was the expression of Christ's new-born identity as the Son of God. It was also the expression of His kingship as the great Shepherd of the sheep.

The revelation of Christ's name revealed His authority to lead His sheep to the safety of the sheepfold. Once the crowd had staggered back to their feet, Jesus asked them again, who they were looking for. He restated His testimony and demanded that they let all the disciples go to their houses. **Joh 18:7-8**. This protection of the disciples fulfilled the word of Christ in the Scripture, 'Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one'. **Joh 18:9**. When Jesus was struck down as the Shepherd at the gate of Gethsemane, the disciples were scattered. However, they were not scattered to be lost and destroyed. This is a key point. They were scattered to their houses.

We know that the disciples would not have had their own homes in Jerusalem. They were from Galilee. **Luk 22:59**. The disciples went to the houses that Jesus had established in the region of Jerusalem as part of His sheepfold. They were protected in this house to house fellowship. The blood that Christ shed in the garden of Gethsemane, as great clots from every pore of His body, had already been sprinkled upon the doorposts and lintels of each of these households. This whole interaction reveals the wisdom of God. The Father had *returned His hand* to protect the little ones, who belonged to Christ's flock, by *turning His hand* against their great Shepherd to strike Him down. **Zec 13:7**.



Restoring
my Soul