occasion. The freewill is self-explanatory: it has no occasion other than the spontaneous desire of the worshiper to offer this joyous sacrifice. The vowed offering is brought if the conditions of a vow are met. The offerer makes a vow to God like "If such-and-such happens, then I will offer a (vowed) well-being offering in gratitude for you having brought those conditions to pass." A good example of this type is when Absalom tells David, "'Please let me go to Hebron and pay the vow that I have made to the LORD. For your servant made a vow while I lived at Geshur in Aram: If the LORD will indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will worship the LORD in Hebron'" (2 Sam 15:7–8 NRSV).[49] Neither the freewill nor the vowed offering are required. They are completely voluntary. Though, of course, once someone *voluntarily* makes a vow to offer a sacrifice if certain conditions come to pass, then if those conditions are met at that point they are under *obligation* to fulfill their vow (e.g., Num 6:21; Pss 50:14b; 116:18; Jonah 2:10b [v. 9b Eng.]).

The thanksgiving offering is unique because it requires an unleavened bread component (7:12) and it only has a one-day expiration (all leftover meat must be burned before the next morning, 7:15; 22:29–30). It is offered when one is thankful for a particular previous act of divine deliverance (e.g., Pss 50:14–15, 23; 56:12–13; 107:21–22; 116:17–18; Jonah 2:10 [v. 9 Eng.]; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.236).[50]

Since this well-being sacrifice will be relevant for understanding the NT's claims about Jesus's death, it is worth noting the rabbinic teaching that because thanksgiving offerings are not offered for sin, this means in the world to come the thanksgiving offerings will be the only kind of remaining

49. I am using this example from Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 219.

50. Levine, *In the Presence*, 43. Also, the well-being sacrifices were most likely accompanied by songs of thanksgiving (e.g., Pss 42:5 [v. 4 Eng.]; 95:2; 100:1; 107; Jonah 2:10a [v. 9a Eng.]). In fact, Ps 107 is a thanksgiving song outlining several occasions for giving thanks, which the rabbis use as specific occasions to offer the thanksgiving sacrifice per v. 22 (b. Ber. 54b). There are five broad occasions mentioned (*pace* Milgrom, who does not include vv. 2–3 [*Leviticus*, 28 and *Leviticus 1–16*, 219]): redemption from enemies by being gathered from the four compass points (vv. 2–3), deliverance and sustenance through the wilderness (vv. 4–9), deliverance from a prison of darkness and death (vv. 10–16), salvation from severe affliction/illness (vv. 17–22), and being brought safely home from a hazardous sea voyage (vv. 23–32). All of these can be applicable on the individual level, but the first three echo communal acts of deliverance that either refer to the exodus and/or the return from exile or use these as paradigms for any sort of communal deliverance. Psalm 107:2–3 is a straightforward description of gathering from exile, vv. 4–9 alludes to the exodus and wilderness wandering, and vv. 10–16 can be read similarly if exile is construed as a type of imprisonment. These descriptions of deliverance are patterned after the exodus (as even "return from exile" is conceptualized in relation to the exodus) and can be applicable to both individuals and the community whenever God acts to deliver them from whatever peril they find themselves in.

offering (Lev. Rab. 9:1, 7), always praising God for saving us from the old age.[51]

Now we can turn to two specific types of communal well-being offerings that will be most relevant for analyzing NT texts in relation to Jesus's death: the Passover and the covenant-inauguration/renewal ceremonies.

THE PASSOVER

The Passover is a required annual sacrificial feast for all Israel to celebrate their deliverance from Egypt (Exod 12). Here I will discuss what the Passover is and is not (removing prevalent misconceptions). As I will show, the Passover is best categorized as a unique type of thanksgiving well-being sacrifice.

Strictly speaking, however, the ritual prescribed in Exod 12:1–23 for the first Passover is *not* a sacrifice. Not only is the first one not called a "sacrifice" (*zebaḥ*), it cannot be one by definition because there is no priest and no altar (thus none of it can be burned and translated into smoke to produce a "pleasing aroma" for God).[52] Moreover, the fact that the first Passover was categorically not a sacrifice solves a longstanding interpretive conundrum caused by a discrepancy between the instructions in Exod 12:8–9 to roast the meat directly over fire and *not* "boil" (*bāšēl*) it and the contradictory instruction in Deut 16:7 to "boil" (*bāšal*) the meat. All *sacrificial* meat that is eaten by humans needs to be boiled (*bāšal*, e.g., Exod 29:31; Lev 6:28; 8:31; Num 6:19; 1 Kgs 19:21; Ezek 46:20, 24; Zech 14:21; 2 Chr 35:13). Roasting *sacrificial* meat for human consumption is sacrilege (1 Sam 2:12–17). This is because only God's portion is to be in direct contact with the fire, whereas the portions allotted for human consumption requires mediating objects between it and the fire (a boiling pot and water).[53] Ronald S. Hendel concludes that "an essential difference that separates the humans from their God" is enacted through these distinct modes of ritual "cooking."[54] While "both the Israelites and Yahweh share in the consumption of the sacrificial animal" and "in this sense the deity and the people are joined," there nevertheless remains a distinction between God and humans because "they consume different portions that are prepared differently"—"the human portion

51. Similarly, the author of Hebrews thinks some form of the thanksgiving sacrifice persists even after Jesus's once-for-all-time sacrifice of atonement (13:15).

52. Eberhart, *The Sacrifice*, 120.

53. Hendel, "Sacrifice as a Cultural System," 382–84.

54. Hendel, "Sacrifice as a Cultural System," 384.

is boiled while Yahweh's portion is burned."[55] Since cooking sacrificial meat in the same manner God's portion is "cooked" is sacrilege (1 Sam 2:12–17), then the requirement to cook the Passover over a direct flame indexes it in a non-sacrificial category. By repeating the instruction to roast the meat and explicitly prohibiting boiling in Exod 12:8–9, it almost seems as if the author is waving their hands wildly shouting: *"The first Passover was not a sacrifice!"* There is no priesthood yet, there is no altar, and they cooked it in a non-sacrificial manner. Everything about the first Passover is categorically not a sacrifice.

However, the author notes that each *subsequent* Passover will be celebrated as a "sacrifice" (*zebaḥ*, Exod 12:27) when it is incorporated into the sacrificial and calendrical framework. The verbal form *zābaḥ* is used throughout Deut 16:1–8 ("*sacrifice* the Passover") because now there is an ordained priesthood, a sanctuary, and an altar upon which the fat is to be burned and whose sides the blood is to be dashed on.[56] And this is then why Deut 16:7 specifies that the Passover needs to be "boiled" since it is now categorized as a "sacrifice" and thus the portions for human consumption have to be boiled and cannot be in direct contact with fire. So there is no real contradiction between Exod 12:8–9 and Deut 16:7 since the difference in cooking instructions function to index the Passover differently in its different contexts (from the last meal before the exodus to a memorial of the exodus incorporated within Israel's liturgical calendar). That is, the function of "roasting" in Exod 12 necessarily indexes it outside of the sacrificial system (and having non-priests sacrifice, let alone sacrifice without an altar for the fat and a portion of the meat to be burned up for God, would be a major cultic problem); whereas since Deut 16 is incorporating Passover within the sacrificial calendar, the instructions need to index it accordingly by changing the manner in which the meat is cooked. "Boiling" the meat for human consumption is the necessary way to indicate that it is now a "sacrifice" because it matches how sacrificial meat is prepared for human consumption.

Also, although Num 9 does not use the words *zebaḥ* or *šəlāmîm*, it does call it "the LORD's offering [*qorbān*]" (v. 7), which is the largest umbrella term for every type of sacrifice in the Torah (Lev 1:2).[57] Additionally,

55. Hendel, "Sacrifice as a Cultural System," 384.

56. Though there is some evidence that some Diaspora Jews ignored Deut 16 and Num 9 and relied on Exod 12 so that they could celebrate and eat a Passover meal outside of Jerusalem. E.g., Philo, *Spec.* 2.145–49; Josephus, *Ant.* 14.260; and Jub. 49:16, 18, 20, and 21 seems to be denouncing this practice repeatedly precisely because enough families were actually doing it (references found in Sanders, *Judaism*, 133–34).

57. *Pace*, Eberhart, who incorrectly asserts that "the Passover is never called an 'offering [*qorbān*] for God' and is not counted among the cultic sacrifices in the priestly cult system" (*The Sacrifice*, 120; his brackets).

the Passover instructions in Num 9 (and the instructions for an emergency alternative Passover a month later) precede the summative statement in 10:10 about the "appointed times of feasting" that require "your sacrifices of well-being [*zibḥê šalmêkem*]." Since the Passover is one such "appointed times of feasting," then it is best understood as belonging to these sacrifices of well-being. Additionally, the fact that the Passover participants need to be "clean/pure" (*ṭāhôr*) (9:13) to eat the Passover necessarily indexes it as belonging to the category of well-being sacrifices as noted earlier (Lev 7:20–21; 22:3–7).[58] Therefore, although the first Passover was evidently *not* a sacrifice, it subsequently belongs to the well-being sacrifices.

Not only is the Passover indexed as a general well-being sacrifice, but it is also specifically indexed as a unique kind of thanksgiving well-being sacrifice because it likewise has a one-day expiration (Exod 12:8, 10; 34:25; Num 9:12; Deut 16:4; cf. Lev 7:15; 22:29–30) and needs to be accompanied with unleavened bread (Exod 12:8; Num 9:11; Deut 16:3; cf. Lev 7:12–13).[59] It makes sense that of the three types of well-being offerings the Passover would be related to the thanksgiving offering. This is because the other two are unprompted—the freewill offering is "purely spontaneous" and the vowed offering is also spontaneously promised by the offerer if certain conditions come about—whereas the thanksgiving offering is for celebrating a particular prior act of divine deliverance.[60] Thus, the Passover and the thanksgiving offering also "share the same motivation: thanksgiving for deliverance, both national *(pesaḥ)* and individual."[61]

Again, Passover has nothing to do with atonement.[62] This word is never used in either the initial ritual or in the subsequent explanations of it. This is unsurprising now given what has been laid out so far, yet Christian scholars in particular seem especially predisposed to conflate sacrificial categories here.[63] Since the laity eat from it and since it is more specifically aligned

58. Note also how being "unclean/impure" (Num 9:6, 10) likewise disqualifies the person from being about to eat the Passover. Similarly, Balberg, *Blood for Thought*, 147.

59. Similarly, Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 219–20.

60. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 220.

61. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 220.

62. Similarly, Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1081; Shauf, *Jesus the Sacrifice*, 137; Marianne Meye Thompson, *John*, 47, 47n15.

63. E.g., Morales claims without argument or warrant that "atonement" is one of "three distinct elements of the Passover ritual found in Exodus 12:6–11" and takes this even further by asserting "[t]he sacrifice involved the concept of substitutionary atonement, the animal's death being regarded as 'in the stead of' the firstborn male within each Israelite household, atoning for sin" (*Who Shall Ascend*, 80). Below I rebut the

with the non-atoning thanksgiving well-being sacrifice, then it cannot have an atoning function. If it had an atoning function, then the people would be prohibited from eating from it. The Passover is a distinctive thanksgiving well-being sacrifice thanking God for Israel's liberation from Egypt.[64]

Notably, and to anticipate chapter 5, just like the first Passover was a *proleptic* celebration for what was immediately about to happen, so too is the first Lord's Supper. Jesus not only tethers the meaning of his death with the Passover feast in general with the timing of his death and with the unleavened bread and wine, but that final meal itself was similarly explained as a proleptic celebration for what was immediately about to take place. All subsequent celebration feasts take on a "memorial" function (Exod 12:14; cf. Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24–25)—and the well-being offerings are the only kind of sacrifices said to have a memorial function in the Torah (Num 10:10).[65] This memorial function per Num 10:10 is why "all joyous celebrations that would have been marked by the well-being offering, the joyous sacrifice par excellence" since they commemorate acts of deliverance both national and individual.[66]

The Passover Is Not a Substitutionary Death

Some of the common (mostly Christian) misunderstandings of Passover have already been indirectly corrected in the foregoing observations, but it is worth connecting the dots more explicitly here to address the most pressing misunderstanding for our purposes: the interpretation that the "lamb dies in the place of the firstborn of Israel and its substitutionary death is indicated by the blood on the doorposts and lintel."[67] This reading is, as Gilders notes, "heavily dependent on the Western Christian doctrine of

claim that the Passover has anything to do with a substitutionary death.

64. I say "*distinctive* thanksgiving well-being sacrifice" here (and "unique kind of thanksgiving well-being offering above") to flag that there are a couple differences between Passover and the regular thanksgiving offering. E.g., (a) Passover requires "bitter herbs" (Exod 12:8) that are not part of the thanksgiving offering and (b) a thanksgiving offering has both unleavened and leavened bread components (Lev 7:13), but all leaven is strictly forbidden for the Passover (Exod 12:15, 19; 13:6–7). Nevertheless, the Passover most resembles the thanksgiving well-being offering. But even if someone is disinclined to link them as closely as I and others, like Milgrom, do, the fact remains that the Passover is a non-atoning sacrifice from which the laity eat.

65. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 224; Barber and Kincaid, "Cultic Theosis in Paul," 252, 252n57.

66. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 252.

67. Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 46. Gilders disagrees with this interpretation.

'substitutionary atonement.'"[68] But this reading is already hamstrung by the fact that the Passover (along with all other well-being sacrifices) was not about "atonement" (*kipper*).[69] But what else might be going on besides celebrating divine deliverance, especially as Exod 12 describes the first Passover?

Whatever is happening, "substitutionary death" is less than plausible. This is because, as Gilders further observes, "there is little evidence for 'the magic of sympathetic substitution.' The text never indicates that the blood substitutes for the blood of those in the house."[70] The only explicit statements about the function of the blood are unambiguous and have nothing to do with "substitutionary death." These comments are in Exod 12:13 and 23. Both comment that the blood functions as a signal for God to "see" it and either not directly smite the Israelite home (v. 13) or for God to "see" it and so restrain the "destroyer" from smiting the house (v. 23).[71] Verse 13 calls it as "sign" and so, the most the text decidedly claims is that "the blood signals the presence of the Israelites in the houses."[72] The blood is only said to "serve as a tangible sign of . . . remembrance" because at first "Yahweh will *see* the blood and will *remember* the Israelites"[73] and then all subsequent Passovers are themselves a celebratory sacrificial "remembrance" (12:14). Loading more meaning into the blood here simply goes beyond what is written; it "requires conceptual gap filling."[74]

Now, not all "gap filling" is inherently problematic. It all depends on the method and rationale of using any information outside the immediate context. But the logic of thinking, "Well, if they didn't have blood smeared on the door frames, the firstborn would die and this therefore means the blood is a substitutionary death" is fallacious.[75] For one, the text claims that failure to observe the Passover will mean not only the death of the firstborn male in the family, but the death of the firstborns of all their livestock too (11:5; 12:12, 29; 13:15). So is the lamb, which itself does not have to be

68. Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 46.

69. See also Thompson, *John*, 47.

70. Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 45; cf. 46.

71. "The text offers no explanation except that Yahweh sees the blood and restrains the 'destroyer'" (Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 46).

72. Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 49.

73. Hendel, "Sacrifice as a Cultural System," 387; my emphasis.

74. Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 46.

75. E.g., "Apart from the slaying of the lamb, it is evident that the firstborn sons of Israel would have died. . . . The sacrifice therefore involved the concept of substitutionary atonement, the animal's death being regarded as 'in the stead of' the firstborn male within each Israelite household, atoning for sin" (Morales, *Who Shall Ascend*, 80).

"firstborn" (!), a substitutionary firstborn cow, bull, goat, ram, and donkey as well? For another, this same substitutionary logic would also mean that all the Passover instructions are necessarily substituting for the death of the firstborn and all family members since failure to do any of the other instructions likewise results in being "cut off" (12:15, 19; Num 9:13). Consuming bitter herbs is not "substituting" for their deaths. Refraining from all leaven is not "substituting" for their deaths. Eating or otherwise burning any leftovers before morning is not "substituting" for their deaths. Yet failure to observe any of these would result in the firstborn dying and the household being "cut off" according to the text.

Put another way, just because something averts being cut off does not mean it is "substitutionary." If an Israelite family only did the blood smearing bit with the lamb, but neglected eating bitter tasting herbs and/or ate plumb-risen bread and/or didn't eat or burn all the leftovers before morning, then the firstborn along with the whole family would perish. This means the lamb was not really "substituting" for the firstborn, otherwise that would be sufficient to automatically have spared him even though everything else was neglected. The consequences for not partaking of the Passover properly cannot be reduced to a logic of an isolated discrete instance of the lamb substituting for the firstborn. The feast needs to be understood as a whole.

Further, it is not the case that a stated consequence for a failure to do this-or-that instruction means that positively obeying those instructions "substitutes" for the consequence. This is a non sequitur. Cause and effect relationships work in many ways; so to reduce the Passover to "substitution" is question begging. This might be easier to understand if we change the consequence from the firstborn dying and/or the unobservant Israelite from being cut off to being struck with something else, say, paralysis. I find it hard to believe that someone would assert that the blood ritual is a "substitutionary paralysis" and this is because in any other context we know that cause and effects do not inherently reduce to the logic of substitution. The only basis for connecting the death of the firstborn and what happens to the lamb is a misunderstanding regarding OT sacrifice that was debunked in chapter 1; namely, the mistaken idea that sacrifice is about "death" at all, let alone a *substitutionary* death. Yes, a lamb has to literally die to be eaten, but its *death* is given no ritual significance in Exod 12 just like the death of any sacrificial animal is not given any ritual or theological significance in the Torah, as discussed in chapter 1. However, the proper use of its blood, roasting its meat, burning any leftovers before morning, etc., are all given explicit ritual meaning (e.g., "roasting" its meat overtly marks the first Passover ritually as a "non-sacrificial" event—it might need to be said that there are such things as non-sacrificial rituals).

Before discussing the plausible meaning and rationale of the blood further, it is worth observing another way in which the logic that the lamb is substituting for the firstborn breaks down upon closer inspection.[76] If the Passover lamb "substituted" for or "redeemed" all the firstborns for an Israelite family (human and animal), then why does Israel still need to "redeem" their firstborns, human and animal, later and in a *completely alternative manner* (Exod 13:2, 11–16; 34:19–20; cf. 22:29–30; Num 18:15–17)? This makes it obvious that the Passover lamb was not substituting for any of the firstborns, otherwise the annual Passover ceremony would itself *be* how the firstborns (human and animal) are "redeemed" by dedicating the Passover lamb to God instead each year.

In fact, these passages in Exodus do not specify how to "redeem" the firstborn humans (13:2, 11–16; 34:19–20) or "give" them to God (22:29–30), but, ironically enough given the context of our present discussion, it is explicitly clear in 13:13 that "lambs" will not do. This is because lambs can only substitute for the redemption of non-sacrificial firstborn *animals*, such as donkeys.[77]

Even though the Passover is actually rather uncomplicated—it is a ritual celebratory commemoration of a past act of divine deliverance that makes use of the standard cultic meals of thanksgiving, the thanksgiving well-being sacrifices—it takes a while to untangle the notion that the Passover lamb is substituting for the redemption of the human firstborn males since it is layered with several misunderstandings by failing to observe what is actually written in the Torah on such matters.

In any case, although left unexplained in Exodus, the Torah goes on to specify how to "redeem" Israel's human male firstborns (13:2, 11–16; 22:28–29 [Eng. 29–30]; 34:19–20). First, we are told it happens by substituting the firstborns with the Levites (Num 3:12–13, 45; 8:14–18).[78] We learn

76. Contra Morales, *Who Shall Ascend*, 80.

77. Morales misses this and writes: "For the firstborn sons of Israel . . . God commanded the Israelites to redeem them by the substitute sacrifice of a lamb commemorating the redemption of Passover" (*Who Shall Ascend*, 80n12). But this is *not* what the text of Exod 13:11–16 says. Only *animals ineligible* for sacrifice, such as donkeys, can be redeemed with a lamb. As Nahum m. Sarna notes, "[t]he mode of redemption [for human male firstborns] is not given" in Exod 13:13 (*Exodus*, 67), but it is specified elsewhere (e.g., in Numbers).

78. Exodus 22:28–29 (Eng. 29–30) is not about child sacrifice; contra those like Jon Levenson and John J. Collins, who read this as a primitive artifact that Israel used to practice child sacrifice (Levenson, *Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son*, 3–17, 43–52; *Inheriting Abraham*, 70; Collins, *What Are Biblical Values?*, 44). The problem is that they overdetermine what "go to God" means (thanks to Joel Baden for this observation). It is an obvious mistake to think that everything that "goes to God" means it is incinerated on the altar. What happens to each thing dedicated to God (wine, animals,

from this that the firstborns were supposed to be given to God as permanent sanctuary workers, but now the tribe of Levi substitutes for all the firstborns. Second, since the firstborns outnumber the Levites in that first generation, these remaining firstborns are financially redeemed rather than joining the Levites (3:45–51). The redemption cost is not ransoming their lives from *death* as if it were a monetary "substitutionary death." Rather, it is buying back their workload. It is compensation to the sanctuary since it is losing out on the services of more (literal) manpower. This is why we are then told that each firstborn human male subsequently requires a redemption price, which just means that instead of them going to serve at the dwelling place their parents make a payment that goes to the necessary costs of running it instead (18:15–16).

It is not as if the firstborn of every household was threatened every year with death unless a substitute lamb was offered in his place on Passover by the family. The only thing the first Passover established is God's "right" to all the firstborns (human and animal) (Exod 13:2, 15; 34:18–20; Num 3:13; 8:17). Given all these laws about God's right to the firstborns it is clear that whatever the Passover lamb is doing, it is definitely *not* "substituting" for these firstborns because *they are all still owed to God* (and "lambs" can only substitute for unclean animals like donkeys). This necessarily refutes the idea that the Passover lamb is substituting for firstborn *deaths*, which is also strengthened by the fact that we know the firstborns are meant to *live* in dedicated service to God's dwelling place. As we saw, in Exod 13:13 and 34:20 the human male firstborn aspect takes the form of redemption. And how to "redeem" the firstborn is not spelled out in Exodus, but we are told

humans) *depends on what it is*. Thus, animals eligible for sacrifice get sacrificed, but animals that cannot be sacrificed are (obviously) not sacrificed and burned on the altar (hence, either substituting a lamb for a donkey or breaking the donkey's neck, which is the ritual way of indexing the death of the animal as a non-sacrificial death; cf. Sarna, *Exodus*, 67; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 192). Wine cannot touch the top of the altar and be burned because nothing fermented is permitted on the altar (Lev 2:11) and the fire on the altar cannot be put out (6:6) (Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 26; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 188–89). So the wine is poured out on the ground at the base of the altar (Josephus, *Ant.* 3.234). Therefore, what happens to each thing dedicated to God is different according to what it is. Same with humans. Humans are not the sort of thing that can get sacrificed and Israel is not told to substitute their firstborn males for an animal that can be sacrificed (as in the case of a donkey). When firstborn males "go to God" they are dedicated as *permanent sanctuary workers* in every instance in the Bible about this happening. When Samuel is "given to God" and arrives at the dwelling place he is not slaughtered and offered up on the altar. Rather he is dedicated to serve in the dwelling place perpetually (1 Sam 1–2). Similarly, with the Levites in Num 8: the Levites serve in the sanctuary in place of the firstborns from every Israelite family (Num 3:12–13, 45; 8:14–18). Firstborn redemption, therefore, has nothing to do with either human (child) sacrifice in general, or substitutionary death in particular.

right away lambs cannot be used (13:13a). This all eventually gets taken up in Numbers with the dedication of the Levites for service at the dwelling place, which redeems the obligation of the firstborn from each family having to do this work (Num 3:12–13, 45; 8:14–18). The excess firstborns and subsequent firstborns then require a redemption payment to the sanctuary to compensate for their service obligation (3:45–51; 18:15–16).

Therefore, no matter which way we come at this, the Passover lamb cannot be substituting for Israelite firstborns, let alone substituting for their *deaths*, because the dedication and/or redemption of all firstborns occurs completely apart from the Passover ritual and human firstborns are clearly meant to *live* and be dedicated sanctuary workers. This is explicit once we learn that the Levites substitute for God's claim on all the Israelite firstborn males. And the Levitical substitution is not that they are "killed" or "sacrificed" instead of the firstborns. Rather, the Levites fulfill the obligation for Israel to give over all firstborn males to God for permanent service of the sanctuary.

So then, the firstborn aspect of the first Passover is never part of any subsequent Passover celebrations since the firstborn aspect is fulfilled by the Levites' service for human male firstborns (and animal firstborns must be dealt with in their own specific ways). Therefore, to continue to insist on a substitutionary death framework for the Passover lamb despite all the evidence to the contrary is tendentious and unwarranted theological special pleading. There is no scriptural warrant for this. The only warrant for this view comes from an external (and, I will argue, a diametrically opposed) theological framework that has decided beforehand what the form of "salvation" *must* be like (i.e., substitutionary [and perhaps penal as well]) and trying to anchor that in debunked interpretations of biblical practices like sacrifice in general or the Passover in particular.

The Role of the Passover Lamb's Blood

I claimed above that not all "gap filling" is inherently problematic, but I demonstrated why gap filling vis-à-vis the *death* of the lamb is misguided because the death of sacrificial animals never holds any ritual or theological significance in the Torah. The preceding discussion, however, also exhibited how gap filling can be done responsibly regarding God's claim on the firstborns (human and animal). By attending to how the redemption of firstborns is explained and developed outside of Exod 12 and across the Torah and 1 Samuel, we were able to both understand that concept better and simultaneously debunk more misunderstandings. Similarly, I think attending to certain other details in the account of Passover in Exod 12 might

help us "gap fill" and ascertain another layer of meaning to the blood ritual in addition to it serving as a tangible "sign" to signal to God that this is an Israelite household, which is the only explicit comment made in the narrative (12:13, 23).

First, although I have been using "Passover" since that is now the accepted English name for this celebration, the root *p-s-ḥ* more than likely does not mean "pass over," but rather "protect/ion."[79] This is supported by the verbal use of *p-s-ḥ* in Isa 31:5: "Like birds hovering overhead, so the LORD of hosts will protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it, he will spare [*pāsōaḥ*] and rescue it." The "pass over" connotation is a retrospective gloss specific to the narrative of Exod 12 where God's "protection" of Israel can be thought of as "skipping over" or "passing over" the Israelite houses. But the *p-s-ḥ* root "was originally independent of the Exodus events"[80] so "pass over" is not its basic denotation even if this is the particular way God's protection is imagined to have looked like during the tenth plague.

The point here, though, is that the Passover meal is memorializing an event when Israel was "protected." When we examine the peculiar use of blood for the first Passover, its usefulness as a "protective" agent, *only when combined with another key ingredient*, becomes clear. Put another way, although the function of blood is not for the purpose of "atonement" (*kipper*) this does not mean it has no ritual function. We have already seen how it functions at least as a visible and tangible "sign" for God to recognize the house as an Israelite one (12:13, cf. v. 23), and now we can see how it also has the particular function of "protection" (*pesaḥ*, 12:11, 21).

Second, this protective function is supported, not only by the word *pesaḥ*, but also by observing that "hyssop" (*ʾēzôv*) is used in combination with the blood (12:22). Hyssop is not used for many biblical rituals, but in every other ritual besides the first Passover where hyssop is dipped in blood and used as the sprinkling instrument, it serves a "purifying" or even an apotropaic, "protective" or "warding off," function (cf. the mention of hyssop in Ps 51:9 [v. 7 Eng.]). The hyssop-blood combination is only used in purification rites for people that have already recovered from scale disease (*ṣāraʿat*)[81] (Lev 14:3–6), for houses that have recovered from fungus (also labeled as *ṣāraʿat*, 14:34, 44, 54–55) (14:48–52), and finally for people who have contracted corpse impurity and need to be purified to worship at the dwelling place again (Num 19:6, 18).[82]

Without getting bogged down in the nuances of these rituals, we only need to observe four points. (1) "Sin(s)" is never brought up in these texts (e.g., scale disease is not punishment for sin).[83]

(2) None of this blood is *sacrificial* blood because none of it comes from an animal that is offered up on the altar (and thus none of its blood goes on any part of the altar either).[84] As I will emphasize in chapter 4 on

79. Sarna, *Exodus*, 56; Tigay, "Exodus," 117–18; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1081.

80. Sarna, *Exodus*, 56.

81. This can refer to a variety of skin conditions that "produce scales" (Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 127) of "[w]hite, flaky skin" (Thiessen, *Jesus and the Forces of Death*, 46). *Ṣāraʿat* is commonly translated as "leprosy," but this is incorrect because it makes it seem as if Leviticus is talking about what is today called Hansen's disease, which is severe contagious bacterial infection that likely postdates Leviticus (Thiessen, *Jesus and the Forces of Death*, 44–46). Even so, what Leviticus is describing is not "leprosy" but a medically minor skin condition that only has ritual significance. Those whose skin qualifies as *ṣāraʿat* cannot offer sacrifices at the dwelling place until the condition dissipates and they subsequently go through the necessary purity rituals set forth in Lev 13–14. For more, see Milgrom, *Leviticus* , 127–29; Thiessen, *Jesus and the Forces of Death*, 43–54.

82. For more on the historical cultural-religious context to these rituals and further details see, Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 835, 837–38, 863–65; Milgrom, *Numbers*, 157–63, 438–44.

83. Baden and Moss, "The Origin and Interpretation of *Ṣāraʿat* in Leviticus," 643–62.

84. Milgrom concludes that because the noun *ḥaṭṭāʾt* is used in Num 19:9 and 17 that the red cow is to be considered a purgation sacrifice proper since this is also what Leviticus calls the atoning purgation sacrifices (Lev 4–5, 16) (Milgrom, *Numbers*, 160, 162, 438). But the ritual procedures for the red cow themselves render the whole thing a *quasi*-sacrifice at best. Milgrom even admits that the red cow ritual "does not appear to be a sacrifice at all" since "[t]he blood of the red cow is not offered up on the altar in the same manner as is the blood of every *hattaʾt* and, indeed, of every other animal sacrifice. Rather, the whole cow, together with its blood, is incinerated outside the camp" (*Numbers*, 438). In another place he further destabilizes the notion that it is a sacrifice by noting that this means "nothing is given to God via the altar" and so asks, "How could the ritual of the red cow be a purification [*ḥaṭṭāʾt*] offering if nothing is offered to God?" (*Leviticus*, 34). I think the rationale for calling the red cow a *ḥaṭṭāʾt* even though the ritual procedures make it clear that it is not a *ḥaṭṭāʾt sacrifice* (like the *ḥaṭṭāʾt* sacrifices outlined in Lev 4–5, 16) makes sense given the meaning of the root as a verb. The *piel* verbal construction of the root *ḥ-ṭ-ʾ* means "purify, purge" (e.g., Exod 29:36; Lev 8:15; 14:52; Num 8:21; 19:12, 13, 19, 20; 31:19; Ezek 43:20, 22, 23, 26; 45:18; 2 Chr 29:24; Ps 51:9 [v. 7 Eng.]) (see also Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 253; Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 31). Therefore, the most likely (and rather unspectacular) reason for calling the burning of the red cow, along with all the other necessary ingredients, a *ḥaṭṭāʾt* is not because it is a "purgation *sacrifice*," but rather because it is simply a "purgation *procedure*" or a "purification *rite*." It is something that "purges/purifies," but because (a) it is not purging sancta and (b) its blood does not go on the altar nor (c) is its fat burned on the altar, then it is not indexed as a *sacrifice*, let alone a purgation sacrifice. It is just a special purgation ritual for people who have come in contact with a corpse and so cannot come to the dwelling place to worship (Num 19:13, 20).

It is worth noting, in fact, that in a psalm that questions the efficacy of sacrifices (Ps 51:18–19 [vv. 16–17 Eng.]), hyssop is said to "purify" the person (*ḥiṭṭēʾ*, Ps 51:9 [v. 7 Eng.]). The effect of purification, then, does not require that a *sacrifice* was its cause. Since hyssop seems to inherently purify (*ḥiṭṭēʾ*), a ritual that uses hyssop twice in order to purify people (first it is burned along with everything else to create ashes in Num

atoning sacrifices, the blood used to decontaminate the dwelling place from sins and severe impurities comes from a *ḥaṭṭā't* ("purgation") sacrifice, but this *ḥaṭṭā't* blood is never placed on any people.[85]

(3) Given that these are the only places where hyssop is used with blood, it is apparent that using these together is the taken-for-granted standard ingredients to use in non-sacrificial purification rituals (a practice that likely predates these writings). Hyssop-blood is the common denominator between all of these and the first (non-sacrificial) Passover.[86] By observing the functions and contexts of these rituals besides Passover, we can see that the hyssop-blood combination offers some sort of generalized protection. This does not mean it is warding off the *same* thing in each ritual. This combination is incorporated into specific rituals aimed at warding off specific threats. Since the *ṣāra'at* person and/or house has to be physically healed of the infection *prior* to the hyssop-blood rituals (Lev 14:3–4, 48), then the hyssop-blood cannot be conceived of as actually healing the person/house. It may have been a folk ritual used proactively to inoculate against scale disease or reactively to heal it (and perhaps this was an exorcism, since similar rites are attested in other Mesopotamian exorcism rituals), but once it gets incorporated into the Levitical priestly system these possible functions have disappeared.[87] In Leviticus it is either purifying any remaining invisible (symbolic?) miasma from these people/houses or warding off reinfection (or perhaps both) of the person/house. Whatever else can be said about what is going on here, the hyssop-blood is at the very least offering some sort of post-infection and post-healing protection from any possible lingering effects of the impurity of *ṣāra'at*. For corpse impurity, however, the hyssop-ash (Num 19:6) and the hyssop dipped in the hyssop-ash-water that is then sprinkled on the person (19:17–18) can be said to actually purify the

19:6 and then, in v. 18, it is used as the sprinkling instrument that is dipped in the hyssop-ash-water) is understandably called a *ḥaṭṭā't* (19:9, 17) to indicate that it is a purification procedure (19:12, 13, 19, 20). True, the red cow ritual has quasi-sacrificial-like aspects, but so do the bird rituals for scale disease. And Milgrom argues convincingly that these bird rituals are definitely not sacrifices, let alone *ḥaṭṭā't* offerings, for similar reasons I am refusing to do so for the red cow ritual (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 833–35, 888).

Therefore, Milgrom's conclusion that the red cow is a purgation *sacrifice* simply on the basis of the use of the word *ḥaṭṭā't* is mistaken. There need not be any more rationale to call the red cow ritual a *ḥaṭṭā't* (Num 19:9, 17) other than that it is a procedure that *purifies* (19:12, 13, 19, 20).

85. The only blood that gets placed on people is either non-sacrificial blood (like in the case of the non-sacrificial bird blood for the person just healed from scale disease [see above note]), or non-*ḥaṭṭā't* blood.

86. Balberg, *Blood for Thought*, 147.

87. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 835, 837–38, 863–65.

person from the impurity (*ṭāmē'*) adhering to their bodies by contact with a corpse (19:13, 20).

For the first Passover, then, using hyssop to sprinkle the blood on the doorposts and lintel of a house (Exod 12:22) is most like the ritual for the *ṣāra'at* house in Lev 14:48–52. The Passover ritual with hyssop, therefore, which is also unique to the first Passover since *hyssop is not used in any subsequent Passovers*, can be reasonably conceived of as purifying the house to protect it from "the destroyer" coming in, which is exactly what Exod 12:22–23 conveys. It is a preventative apotropaic ritual warding off this specific one-off threat.[88] Hence, calling this meal celebrating this event "the Protection" (*hapāsaḥ*, Exod 12:21) makes good sense because God will "see" the hyssop-tossed blood and "protect" the house from "the destroyer" who will then not be able to "enter" (12:22–23; cf. v. 13).

Finally, (4) the concept of substitutionary death is never present in any of these hyssop rituals. The (non-sacrificial) blood is not functioning as a "substitutionary death" for those whom the hyssop-blood is protecting/purifying. Using hyssop to dip in blood (or ash-water with blood and hyssop-as-ash components) and sprinkle on things is simply taken for granted as a non-sacrificial purification procedure. What it purges and/or wards off is different depending on the ritual context. In any case, the hyssop-blood only happens at that first (non-sacrificial) Passover. Once Passover becomes incorporated as a sacrifice in Israel's liturgical calendar, there is no hyssop-blood and no door frames are supposed to be smeared with it (neither is the altar dashed with hyssop-blood). In fact, after setting forth all this information, then along with the previous observations about why the first Passover is not a sacrifice (no priesthood, no altar, not boiling the meat), the *presence* of hyssop only at the first Passover is yet another way the text indexes that first Passover as "not a sacrifice." The absence of hyssop at all subsequent Passovers, therefore, makes sense if hyssop is only used in non-sacrificial rituals (i.e., rituals whose blood/animal components are not offered up to God on the altar).

Therefore, the Passover does not have an atoning function, but the first Passover is depicted as having a protective (*pesaḥ*) apotropaic function,

88. Since the first Passover ritual was actually apotropaic (a proactive procedure to ward off a future threat), it might be how the hyssop-blood rituals for *ṣāra'at* were used originally before they were incorporated into the priestly system. In other words, the hyssop-blood combination for purification of people and houses might have originally been used in the same proactive manner depicted in Exod 12 (and they might even have been used to try to cure the disease itself once present). But once these rituals were included as part of the formal priestly purity and sacrificial system, then their proactive and healing uses were discarded in favor of a post-hoc ritual purification after the disease was already healed on its own.

anchored as it is in the standard non-sacrificial ritual ingredients and procedures for warding off a threat, applying blood on a house with hyssop branches. All subsequent Passovers function as sacrificial commemorations of this event, celebrated by feasting on a unique type of (non-atoning) thanksgiving well-being offering.

COVENANT-INAUGURATION AND COVENANT-RENEWAL CEREMONIES

The covenant at Sinai was inaugurated with burnt offerings and well-being offerings (Exod 24:5). Now that we understand the relationship between these, it makes sense that the relationship between God and Israel would be initiated with these sacrifices because their main function is the meeting of God and people through sacred feasting (cf. 24:11). In general, these are sacrifices of *invitation* and *celebration* and cannot have an atoning function.[89] In particular, these are celebrating the ratification of the so-called "Mosaic" or "Sinaitic" covenant. It is this particularity that accounts for a peculiar blood ritual that is unique to Exod 24: in addition to the altar, blood is also sprinkled upon the people (v. 8).

Before discussing that unique blood ritual, it is worth seeing how future covenant-renewal ceremonies feature *only* these same non-atoning sacrifices, but without the blood-sprinkling ritual. For example, Moses instructs Joshua to facilitate one such covenant-renewal ceremony upon crossing the Jordan river (Deut 27:4–8), which Joshua does (Josh 8:30–35). We see similar covenant-renewal ceremonies with King Asa (2 Chr 15:10–15), King Hezekiah (29:30–36, esp. vv. 31, 35), and again at the re-institution of the Passover with another covenant renewal (30:1–27, esp. v. 22), and King Manasseh after his repentance (2 Chr 33:16). The common denominator for all these is the well-being (*šəlāmîm*)/eaten-sacrifice (*zebaḥ*). This is the standard covenant-ratifying sacrifice according to Ps 50:5 (NRSV): "Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice [*zebaḥ*]!"[90]

Further, once the Maccabees successfully defeated Antiochus IV, they rededicate the altar for eight days and only burnt offerings and well-being offerings are mentioned (1 Macc 4:56). Even if this is not quite the same

89. Similarly, Shauf, *Jesus the Sacrifice*, 123.

90. The burnt offerings seem to function as the invitation for God to come meet with the people (i.e., the function of divine "attraction") per Exod 20:24, but the ratification of the covenant-renewal ceremony happens when the people feast together with God from the well-being sacrifices, since this is the only one consumed by both parties (God and the people).

as a covenant-renewal ceremony, it is a re-dedication to "the law" (4:53) and commemorating their deliverance from Antiochus (4:59). Thus, only sacrificing burnt and well-being offerings is expected, since these are the appropriate sacrifices for such purposes and occasions.

The main idea is that when a leader wants to mark the renewal of the covenant, they use well-being sacrifices because one of the key functions of those sacrifices is to serve as communal feasts of commemoration and celebration. Now that we understand their broad use in contexts that have great national significance, we can examine the role of the distinct blood ritual associated with the well-being sacrifices for this function.

The Visible Memorial Function

Even though the blood ritual for the covenant-inauguration is not about atonement, it still has a significant function as a sign of the bond being ratified or renewed. This becomes clear when we attend to two aspects of the blood ritual described in Exod 24:6 and 8. The first is "dashing" (*zāraq*) on the sides of the altar (v. 6) and the second is "dashing" it upon the people (v. 8). Dashing the blood on the sides of the altar is standard protocol for burnt and well-being sacrifices (e.g., Lev 1:5, 11; 3:2, 8), but dashing it on people only happens here; it is not in any of the covenant-renewal ceremonies.

Regarding the first aspect, "dashing" blood on the sides of the altar does not happen with the atoning purgation sacrifices (*ḥaṭṭāʾt*). As Josephus was careful to highlight, when the blood from the purgation sacrifices goes on an altar (there are two altars, the outer altar for animal sacrifices and the altar inside the holy place for burning incense only), then it only goes on their protruding "horns," not its sides (e.g., Lev 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 3.231).[91] The blood manipulations between these sacrifices are further distinguished by the use of different verbs. Whereas the burnt and well-being sacrifices have their blood "dashed" or "tossed" (*zāraq*) on the altar's sides, the purgation sacrifice has its blood "daubed," "smeared," or more generally "put" (*nātan*) on the altar's horns.[92] The different actions

91. As discussed later, the purgation sacrifice blood goes on a different altar depending on who it is for. But whenever it goes on either altar it is only daubed on its four horns.

92. For more on the distinctions between the various blood manipulation terminology in Leviticus, see Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 25–32.

with the blood and the different locations it contacts both index the distinct functions of these sacrifices.[93]

The visibility of these different blood rituals is important.[94] From the perspective of the laity, who cannot "come near" the outer altar (this is only accessible to *priests*, not even Levites, Num 18:2, 7, 22; 1:51), they cannot see the horns of the altar from above, which means they cannot see the blood daubed on top of them. This is especially the case since the altar is elevated, built on a platform, and so required a long ramp up to it (Exod 20:26). And for the atoning blood rituals that take place inside the dwelling place proper (the holy place and holy of holies), the laity cannot see any of it. It is completely hidden from view behind the curtain blocking access to the dwelling place. But the laity can see the *sides* of the outer altar from afar. This means the only sacrificial blood visible to the laity is the blood dashed on its sides for the burnt and well-being sacrifices, making it look red. Hence, when describing the unique blood ritual of the well-being sacrifices, Josephus says the priests "redden [*phoinissō*] the altar with the blood" (*Ant.* 3.228, my translation).

Ronald S. Hendel argues that it is specifically the *visibility* of the "blood splashed on the side of the altar" that allows it to function as "a tangible, visible reminder of the performance of the sacrifice."[95] He connects this visibility back to the only stated function of the burnt and well-being offerings in Exod 20:24; namely, that God will "come" to Israel there to bless them. In this way, "The blood that remains on the side of the altar long after the ceremony is concluded serves as a tangible sign of the remembrance and corresponding blessing. It [the blood dashing] is not only a part of the ceremony, but a remnant and symbol of it."[96]

Importantly, 20:24 is the only comment we get regarding the purpose of sacrifices (and only the burnt and well-being sacrifices are named) in the so-called "Covenant Code" (all the laws from Exod 20:22—23:19, or more precisely 21:1—22:16), which is what immediately precedes the covenant-inauguration ceremony in 24:3–8 that features these two sacrifices. Exodus 24:3 says that Moses recounts to Israel all the things God told him, which is all the laws in 20:22—23:19, before ratifying the covenant with these sacrifices. This means that the blood-dashing on the sides of the altar for the covenant inauguration in 24:6 functions, first, as Hendel puts, "not only [as]

93. See also Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 88–96, 109.

94. For an excellent study for how the (in)visibility of sacrificial blood matters in various Second Temple Jewish texts, including Leviticus, see Feldman, "Sanitized Sacrifice in Aramaic Levi's Law of the Priesthood," 343–68.

95. Hendel, "Sacrifice as a Cultural System," 387.

96. Hendel, "Sacrifice as a Cultural System," 387.

part of the ceremony, but a remnant and symbol of it."[97] Recall that well-being sacrifices have a memorial and remembrance function (e.g., Num 10:10; cf. Exod 12:14) and thus, the blood-dashed sides of the altar plays a visible role to that end. The significance of the blood-dashing ritual is that is serves a "communicative function" of "remembrance" precisely because of its visibility to the people to see.[98]

The Bonding Function

But what about the second, and utterly unique, aspect of the covenant-inauguration blood ritual? What purpose does dashing the blood on the people serve (24:8)? In short, I agree with Umberto Cassuto's basic conclusion: "The throwing of half of the blood of the offerings against the altar, which represented the Lord, and half on the people, or that which represented them, signifies a joining together of the two contracting parties (*communio*), and symbolized the execution of the deed of covenant between them."[99] That is, "the application of blood to *both* the altar and the people indexes a bond between the covenant parties."[100] This is a common view among OT scholars.[101]

This interpretation is supported by two further observations. The first is noting how the two blood manipulations bookend the covenant-inauguration ceremony (Exod 24:3–8). Moses first dashes the altar with the blood (24:6), then reads "the book of the covenant" (i.e., the Covenant Code in Exod 20:22—23:19), which the people affirm to obey (24:7), and after this affirmation he dashes the people with the same blood (24:8). These two blood manipulations frame the covenant-making ceremony and thus "mark the bounds of a time in which Yahweh's words are offered to the people in a concrete written form and the people express their acceptance of Yahweh as suzerain."[102] The blood-dashing ritually marks either that the covenant bond is being created in and through the blood manipulations, or that it has already been made (forged by verbal assent to God's words) and the blood is the tangible ratification and memorial of that bond. For our purposes, it

97. Hendel, "Sacrifice as a Cultural System," 387.

98. Hendel, "Sacrifice as a Cultural System," 387.

99. Cassuto, *Exodus*, 312. For the links between the altar and God (or at least as representing God's presence), see Exod 20:25, Ps 42:3 with 43:4; 1 Kgs 8:22, 31, 54; 2 Kgs 18:22–39; Isa 19:19–20.

100. Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 90, his emphasis; cf. 39–41, 89, 102–3.

101. Sarna, *Exodus*, 152; Tigay, "Exodus," 154.

102. Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 40.

does not matter which one is preferred. Either way, whether the blood dashing on both the altar and the people forges, ratifies, or signals a "bond," the blood ritual at the very least "index[es] a relationship between the people and that altar."[103]

The second observation is technically a set of observations and requires expanded discussion.

Sacrificial Blood Application to People Elsewhere: The Metaphysical-Transition Function

By looking at what happens in two other instances when blood is applied to both the altar and people, we can not only strengthen the above point, but we can also plausibly say more than just that this shared blood ritual between the altar and the people "indexes" a relationship. One happens at the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests (Exod 29; Lev 8) and the other is part of the post-healing ritual purification process for the person recovered from scale disease (Lev 14).[104] For all the differences between these three rituals, what they have in common is that the people who have blood applied to them undergo a metaphysical transition. They transfer from one realm into another, always in the direction of holiness (though at different levels).

The first of these is instructed right after the covenant-inauguration ceremony when Moses goes back up the mountain to receive the instructions for constructing the dwelling place and consecrating the priesthood (Exod 25–29), which is then carried out after the dwelling place has been built (Lev 8). As part of a multistep priesthood-consecration process, Moses is instructed to take the blood from a ram used as an "ordination" sacrifice (Exod 29:22, 26; Lev 8:22, 29),[105] and "put" or "daub" (*nātan*) it on the right

103. Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 103.

104. I am not including the corpse purification rite in Num 19 because (a) it is not a sacrifice, as discussed in footnote 84. And (b) what is sprinkled on the people undergoing corpse purification is only ever called "water," not "blood" (19:9, 13, 18, 20–21). Burnt blood is technically an ingredient in the "ash" that is made (19:5, 9), but it is no more emphasized than the animal hide, bones, flesh, hyssop, cedar wood, or scarlet yarn (19:5–6). That being said, even if we wanted to loosen the parameters of comparison, the corpse purification would still mark a metaphysical transition from being impure at the furthest extreme of the im/purity spectrum to being pure.

105. Technically it is called the "ram of filling" (*'el millu'îm*, Exod 29:22, 26; Lev 8:22, 29). We know from its use elsewhere that the "filling" is shorthand for "filling the hands" of the priests (Exod 28:41; 29:9, 29, 35; 32:29; Lev 8:33; 16:32; Num 3:3). It is an idiom for priestly ordination because they are given a portion of the sacrifices in their "hands" (e.g., Exod 29:24–25, 28; Lev 8:22–29). Having sacrificial portions filling their

side earlobes, thumbs, and big toes of Aaron and his sons and then "dash" (*zāraq*) the rest against the sides of the altar (Exod 29:20; Lev 8:23–24). This "ram of ordination" is a one-off special instance of a well-being sacrifice (Exod 29:28) and the distinctive ritual action of "dashing" the blood against the sides of the altar confirms this.

Although the ritual action of "daubing" the blood on soon-to-be priests differs from the "dashing" or "tossing" on the people in Exod 24:8, these "can [be] fruitfully compare[d]" on the basis that these are two of the three times "blood is applied to people and to an altar."[106] It is apparent that these blood rituals are "indexing a relationship between the people [that have blood applied to them] and the altar."[107] Or, as Nahum Sarna expresses, "in both these ceremonies—covenant and ordination—the blood functions mysteriously to cement the bond between the involved parties."[108]

Moreover, although both the covenant-inauguration ceremony and the priestly ordination index a relationship between the people and the altar (God), these relational indexes are different for each group. The different action on Aaron and his sons need not indicate more than the fact that their relationship to God, represented by the altar, is that of *priests*, who mediate even the laity's access to the altar. In other words, the difference in ritual indicates a difference in office and access to the altar. The people have blood "dashed" on them and they will only be able to eat a portion of the non-atoning sacrifices of well-being whose blood is similarly "dashed" on the altar. Perhaps similarly, then, the priests, who also had blood "dashed" on them at the covenant ceremony, have blood "daubed" on them because they will also get to have a portion of certain purgation sacrifices whose blood is "daubed" on the horns of the altar. In any case, the similar "indexing power of the [blood] action is still evident" between these two events.[109]

Pausing over what is taking effect with Aaron and his sons, however, sharpens what we can say is happening when blood is applied to them. From the priestly perspective of the world, everything can be mapped onto two binaries: (a) "common/ordinary" (*ḥōl*) or "holy" (*qōdeš*) and (b) "pure/clean" (*ṭāhôr*) or "impure/unclean" (*ṭāmēʾ*) (Lev 10:10; 11:47; 20:25; Ezek

hands is a symbol of their God-ordained right to offer sacrifices on behalf of the people and to make their living by being fed by portions from them (6:9 [v. 16 Eng.], 11, [v. 18 Eng.], 19 [v. 26 Eng.], 22 [v. 29 Eng.]; 7:6–10, 34–36). For more on this, see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 526–27, 538–39.

106. Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 102–3.

107. Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 103.

108. Sarna, *Exodus*, 152.

109. Gilders, *Blood Ritual*, 102.