

*Chapter 4*  
Adoration of the Mystic Lamb  
Jan Van Eyck  
The Lamb of God and Paschal Mystery

*In this assignment, students are going to dig deeper into the title “Lamb of God” and the understanding of Jesus as the Paschal Lamb. They will compare Scripture references of the Passover with the Eucharist. They will do further research and write down reasons that Jesus is called the Lamb of God.*

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When John the Baptist sees Jesus in the Gospels, he immediately cries out, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”

Throughout Scripture, music, and sacred art we hear reference to this title for Jesus as the “Lamb of God” - but what does this mean? Why do we compare Jesus to a lamb? The reference to Jesus as a lamb is connected with his title of Paschal Lamb, which has connections between the Jewish Passover and Eucharist.

At the center of the Gospel is Christ’s Paschal Mystery. The word *paschal* is taken from the Jewish word for Passover, *pasch*. The Exodus, the occasion in which God spared the firstborn children of Israel and allowed Moses to lead his people from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land, is remembered at Passover. Jesus in the New Testament redefined this experience.

The Gospels suggest that Jesus was celebrating a Passover meal in the upper room with his disciples at the Last Supper (Mt 26:18, Mk 14:22–23, Lk 22:7–13, 1 Cor 11:24–25). At the time that Jesus celebrated this feast, the Passover meal probably included unleavened bread, wine, some herbs, and an unblemished lamb. Their ceremony would have consisted of a blessing (*berakah*) of both the cup and the bread. These elements are described in the New Testament. Yet, there is no sign of the lamb. In its place, Jesus is the Lamb of God, the unblemished paschal lamb (Ex 12:4–5) who is led to slaughter (Is 53:7). Jesus gave the Passover a new meaning. The Eucharist “fulfills the Jewish Passover” through the Paschal Mystery (CCC, 1340). Christ’s Suffering, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension are a passing over from slavery to sin to ultimate freedom in the Resurrection of humanity.

Look up and read each of the Scripture passages listed in the chart below comparing the Passover Meal with the Eucharist.

<b>Passover Meal</b>	<b>Eucharist</b>
Bread and wine (Ex 12:15, Nm 9:11–12)	Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples (Mt Lk 22:19–20)
Unblemished Lamb (Ex 12:4–5)	Jesus is the Paschal Lamb, the Lamb of God (Jn 19:36, 1 Cor 5:7, 1 Pt 1:19)
None of the lamb’s bones should be broken (Nm 9:12)	The soldiers did not break Jesus’ bones on the Cross (Jn 19:33, 36)
Berekah (“blessing”)	Jesus took the bread and said a blessing (Mt 26:26, Mk 14:22, Lk 22:19–20)
Celebrates the Hebrews passing from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land (Ex 12)	Celebrates the passing from slavery to sin to freedom in the Resurrection, from death to new life (1 Cor 5:7–8)

Moses poured blood on the people at the establishment of the Covenant (Ex 24:8, Zec 9:11)	Jesus poured out his blood at the establishment of the New Covenant (Jer 31:31, Lk 22:20)
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From your reading, list three reasons Jesus is called the “Lamb of God” citing a Scripture passage and reference for each reason.

1.

2.

3.