

Only the fact of his vicarious death is announced by Jesus in the simile, not the details of its manner. None the less we can see from the simile and from the use of ἐκχυννόμενον<sup>1</sup> that Jesus did expect a violent death. Mark 14.25 par. makes it clear that Jesus was certain that God would vindicate his death by his resurrection and the establishment of the kingdom.

Yet the words of interpretation involve more.

(b) *A statement about the meaning of Jesus' death*

By comparing himself with the eschatological paschal lamb Jesus describes his death as a *saving death*. It is true that the passover of later times was not an expiatory<sup>2</sup> but an ordinary sacrifice; its blood was not sprinkled on the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, but poured on its base. It was indeed 'well pleasing before God',<sup>3</sup> but it could not be accepted as a substitute for the obligatory sin-offerings. But at the passover meal the attention was directed *not* to the 'passover of the generations', i.e. to the celebration which had been repeated year after year, but to the one 'passover of the exodus' for the sake of which God had mercifully 'passed over' the houses of the Israelites. The blood of the lambs slaughtered at the exodus from Egypt had *redemptive power*<sup>4</sup> and made *God's covenant* with Abraham operative.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 19.94, αἷμα . . . περὶ τὸν σταυρωθέντα ἐκκεχυμένον.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Wünsche, *Neue Beiträge*, 333; Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 123, 168.

<sup>3</sup> Jub. 49.9, 15; Pes. 10.6; Zeb. 4.6 (this last instance in Billerbeck IV, 49f.).

<sup>4</sup> Pirke Rabbi Eliezer 29 (ed., Warsaw, 1878, 51): 'For the merit of the covenant blood of the circumcision and of the passover blood, I have redeemed you out of Egypt, and for their merit will you be redeemed at the end of the fourth (Roman) world empire (i.e. in the days of the Messiah)' (Billerbeck IV, 40).

<sup>5</sup> Targ. Zech. 9.11 (ed., Wilna, 1893): 'You also, for whom a covenant was decided upon over blood, have I redeemed from servitude in Egypt.' Cf. also Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, 167: 'the direct reference is to the blood of the *passover lambs*, which brings into fruition God's "covenant" at the redemption from Egypt' (my italics). Mek. Ex. 12.6: '“And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month.” Why did the scripture require the purchase of the paschal lamb to take place four days before its slaughter? R. Matia b. Heresh (c. AD 125) used to say: Behold it says: “Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, and behold, thy time was the time of love” (Ezek. 16.8). [As so often, the most important words of the quotation for the present context are not given: “I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I plighted my troth to thee and entered into a covenant with thee.”] This means, the time had arrived for the fulfilment of the oath which God had sworn unto Abraham, to deliver his children (Gen. 15.14). But as yet they had no (obligatory) commandments to perform by which to merit redemption (by keeping the commandments), as it further says: “thy breasts were fashioned, and thy hair was grown; yet thou wast naked and bare” (Ezek. 16.7), which means bare of (the keeping of) any commandments. Therefore God gave

As a reward for the Israelites' obedience to the commandment to spread blood on their doors, God manifested himself and spared them, 'passing over' their houses.<sup>1</sup> For the sake of the passover blood God revoked the death sentence against Israel;<sup>2</sup> he said: 'I will see the blood of the passover and make atonement for you.'<sup>3</sup> In the same way the people of God of the End time will be redeemed by the merits of the passover blood.<sup>4</sup> Jesus describes his death as this eschatological passover sacrifice: *his vicarious (ὕπερ) death brings into operation the final deliverance, the new covenant of God. Διαθήκη ('covenant')* is a correlate of βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ('kingdom of heaven').<sup>5</sup> The content of this gracious institution which is meditated by Jesus' death is perfect communion with God (Jer. 31.33-34a) in his reign, based upon the remission of sins (31.34b).

The addition to the wine-word τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν, Hebr. *hannišpak be'ad rabbim*, Aram. *demištephék 'al saggi'in*, 'which will be shed<sup>6</sup> for many', continues the comparison with the sacrifices: ἐκχυννόμενον is taken from the language of sacrifice.<sup>7</sup> It makes clear for whom the atoning and redeeming power of Jesus is effective. It is linked with an Old Testament passage: Isa. 53.12, 'because he poured out (he'erah) his life to death, and was numbered with the transgressors;

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them two commandments: the blood of the paschal sacrifice and the blood of the circumcision, which they should perform so as to be worthy of redemption. For thus it is said: "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee wallowing in thy two kinds of blood" [Ezek. 16.6; *bedamayik* is understood as a dual by the Midrash: passover blood and circumcision blood]. Further it is said: "As for thee also, because of the blood of thy covenant I will send forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water" (Zech. 9.11).<sup>7</sup> Passover blood and circumcision blood are the blood of the covenant for the sake of which the deliverance out of Egypt was granted. So also Ex. R. 17.3 on 12.22.

<sup>1</sup> Mek. Ex. 12.13 par. 12.23.

<sup>2</sup> Ex. R. 15.12 on 12.10. 'It is as if a king said to his sons: Know you that I judge persons on capital charges and condemn them. Give me therefore a present, so that in case you are brought before my judgment seat I may set aside the indictments against you. So God said to Israel: I am now concerned with death penalties, but I will tell you how I will have pity on you and for the sake of the passover blood and the circumcision blood I will atone for you (*mšpr 'l nšwtym*).'

<sup>3</sup> Ex. R. 15.12 on 12.2.

<sup>4</sup> See note above, beginning 'Targ. Zech 9.11'.

<sup>5</sup> J. Behm, *διαθήκη B*, *TWNT* II (1935), 137.

<sup>6</sup> See above, pp. 178f. no. 13.

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 222 n. 5.