

## Haggadah Shel Pesach : Politics, Theology and the Wicked Son

The Torah refers to four sons, one wise, one wicked, one simple and one who does not know to ask.

[The] wise [son], what does he say: What are the testaments, the laws and the judgments which the Lord our G-d commanded you? And you shall tell him of the laws of Pesach...

[The] wicked [son], what does he say: What is this service to you [or, of yours]? To you and not to himself. **And because he separated himself from the community [he] rejects that which is essential [i.e., is guilty of heresy].** And you will blunt his teeth and say to him 'Because of this [i.e., in return for my offering the Pesach sacrifice] G-d acted for me [or, in my behalf] in my leaving Egypt.' For you and not for him [the wicked son]; had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.

[The] simple [son], what does he say? What is this? And you shall say to him 'With a strong hand did G-d take us out of Egypt from the house of bondage.'

And for the son who knows not to ask, you shall open for him [i.e. prompt him], as it is said: "And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, 'Because of this G-d acted for me in taking me out of Egypt.'"

בְּרוּךְ הַמְּקוֹם, בְּרוּךְ הוּא, בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנִּתְּן תּוֹרָה  
לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרוּךְ הוּא. כְּנִגְדֵי אַרְבָּעָה בָּנִים  
דִּבְרָה תּוֹרָה: אֶחָד חָכָם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד  
תָּם, וְאֶחָד שְׂאִינוּ יוֹדְעֵי לְשֵׁאוֹל.

חָכָם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֲדוֹת וְהַחֲקִים  
וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְכֶם. וְאִם  
אֶתָּה אָמֹר לוֹ כְּהִלְכוֹת הַפֶּסַח: אִין מִפְּטִירִין  
אַחַר הַפֶּסַח אֲפִיקוּמָן:

רָשָׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֲבוּדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם.  
לָכֶם – וְלֹא לוֹ. וְלִפִּי שֶׁהוֹצִיא אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִן  
הַכֶּלֶל כְּפָר בְּעֵקֶר. וְאִם אֶתָּה הַקָּהָה אֶת שְׁנֵי  
וְאָמֹר לוֹ: "בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי  
מִמִּצְרַיִם." לִי וְלֹא לוֹ. אֵלֹו הָיָה שָׁם, לֹא הָיָה  
נִגְאָל:

תָּם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה זֹאת? וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו  
"בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית  
עֲבָדִים."

וְשְׂאִינוּ יוֹדְעֵי לְשֵׁאוֹל – אֶת פֶּתַח לוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר,  
וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר, בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה  
עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם.

From Chabad.org: The Wicked Son By Aron Moss

*Question:*

I have long been bothered by the way the wicked son is treated in the Haggadah. When the wicked son asks a question, we are instructed to blunt his teeth. Is the Haggadah condoning violence?

*Answer:*

There are wicked children out there. There are kids that are destructive, obnoxious and bad. But not all bad. Underneath the surface, beneath the layers of rudeness and rebellion, there lies an innocent soul. Even the most delinquent children have goodness at their core. It may be buried beneath layers of hurt and pain, but the soul itself remains pure.

It is up to the parents and teachers to engage the wicked children and try to uncover the hidden goodness within. Seek the cause of the rebellion, find out what set the child on the wrong path. He may have been exposed to a bad crowd of friends or a negative role model; he may have been let down by those he looked up to. Or he may have never been taught how to overcome his own negative tendencies. He may have never learnt how to be good.

**Reverse the process that led him astray, and bring him back to his inner goodness.** Behind his wickedness there is a story, there is a reason why he allowed his innocent soul to become corrupted by his evil side and his pure mind twisted by lower tendencies. Identify the root cause, and then neutralize it. Reverse the process that led him astray, and bring him back to his inner goodness.

This is what the Haggadah means when it says "You should blunt his teeth." De-fang him. Remove the sharpness and bitterness from his bite. Smooth out his rough edges, heal his wounds and allow the goodness in his soul to surface. Take the wicked child and make him righteous.

In fact, this idea is right there in the words of the Haggadah. In the Hebrew language, every letter has a numerical value, called *gematria*. Therefore every word has a number, the sum of its letters. We can learn hidden messages by looking at the numbers behind Hebrew words.

A wicked person is called a *rasha* in Hebrew. The word for a pure person is *tzaddik*. The numerical value of *rasha* is 570. The numerical value of *tzaddik* is 204. The difference between them is 366.

Beneath every *rasha* is a hidden *tzaddik*. We just need to remove the layers of evil and we will find his goodness. Numerically, we have to remove 366 to get 204 from 570.

So we must blunt his teeth. "His teeth" in Hebrew is *shinav*. Its numerical value...366. De-fang the *rasha*, and you will find his inner *tzaddik*.

See my blog post from several years ago: <a href="#">The Wicked Son- Revisited</a>
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The questions posed by each of the first three sons are actually biblical verses which in the original are not associated with one another. **The Midrash related in the Haggadah brings these verses together, and fashions "answers" out of other verses.** The Haggada's sources for this passage are the Jerusalem Talmud and the **Mechiltot of Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai [Rashbi].**

**Let's compare the question of the Wise Son with the Wicked Son**  
 What distinguishes the question of the wise son and the wicked son?

**Wise son's question:**

מָה הָעֵדוּת וְהַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְכֶם

What are the testaments, the laws and the judgments which  
 the Lord our G-d **commanded you?**

**Wicked son's question:**

מָה הָעֲבוּדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם.

What is this service to you [or, of yours]?

### Sefer Devarim Ch. 6

**כ** כִּי-יִשְׁאַלְךָ בֶּןְךָ מָחָר,  
 לֵאמֹר: מָה הָעֵדוּת, וְהַחֻקִּים  
 וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים, אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה  
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֶתְכֶם.

**20** When thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying: 'What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?

**כא** וְאָמַרְתָּ לְבֶנְךָ, עֲבָדִים  
 הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרָיִם;  
 וַיֹּצִיאֵנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרָיִם, בְּיַד  
 חֲזָקָה.

**21** then thou shalt say unto thy son: 'We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

**כב** וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אוֹתוֹת וּמִפְתֵּיִם  
 גְּדֹלִים וְרָעִים בְּמִצְרָיִם,  
 בְּפָרְעָה וּבְכָל-בֵּיתוֹ--לְעֵינֵינוּ.

**22** And the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his house, before our eyes.

כג וְאוֹתָנוּ, הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם--  
לְמַעַן, הִבִּיא אֹתָנוּ, לְתֵת לָנוּ  
אֶת-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע  
לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ.

23 And He brought us out from thence,  
that He might bring us in, to give us the  
land which He swore unto our fathers.

כד וַיְצַוֵנוּ יְהוָה, לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-  
כָּל-הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה, לְיִרְאָה,  
אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ--לְטוֹב לָנוּ  
כָּל-הַיָּמִים, לְחַיֵּתָנוּ כְּהַיּוֹם  
הַזֶּה.

24 And the LORD commanded us to do  
all these statutes, to fear the LORD our  
God, for our good always, that He  
might preserve us alive, as it is at this  
day.

### Mechilta d'R. Yishmael

חכם מה הוא אומר, מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה ה' אלהינו  
אותנו

What does the wise son say? "What are the testimonies and the statutes  
and the judgments that the Lord our God commanded **us**?"

### Jerusalem Talmud

בן חכם מהו אומר (דברים ו) מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה ה'  
אלהינו אותנו

The wise one -- what does he say? "What are the testimonies, statues and  
laws that the Lord, our God, commanded **us**?"

**Question:** How can we explain the text of the Mechilta and the Jerusalem Talmud, since it  
doesn't match the verse in the Torah?

**Rav Ari Kahn:** What is it about the "wicked son" which so infuriates Chaza"l and the  
compilers of the Haggadah? The answer must lie deeper than the language used in the  
questions of the sons; otherwise, the "wise son" would either have been condemned as  
well, or the text of his question would have been uniformly altered. **The answer must lie in  
the point of view each son represents, for in each case, the essence of each son's question,  
surprisingly enough, is overlooked. The Haggadah responds not to the content of the  
questions but to the point of view from which they are posed.** Our sages, in either preserving  
or elaborating on this Midrash and including it in the Haggadah, hoped to convey a very  
specific message. The four sons represent points of view or ideologies which are more  
meaningful than simply the terminology in which their ideas are couched.

The “wicked son’s question in Sefer Shemot

**כה** וְהָיָה כִּי-תָבֹאוּ אֶל-  
הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן יְהוָה לְכֶם--  
כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר; וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם, אֶת-  
הָעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת.

**25** And it shall come to pass, when ye be  
come to the land which the LORD will  
give you, according as He hath promised,  
that ye shall keep this service.

**כו** וְהָיָה, כִּי-יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֵיכֶם  
בְּנֵיכֶם: מָה הָעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת,  
לְכֶם.

**26** And it shall come to pass, when your  
children shall say unto you: What mean  
ye by this service?

**כז** וְאָמַרְתֶּם זָבַח-פֶּסַח הוּא  
לַיהוָה, אֲשֶׁר פָּסַח עַל-בְּתֵי  
בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרַיִם, בְּנִגְפוֹ  
אֶת-מִצְרַיִם, וְאֶת-בְּתֵינֵנוּ  
הֲצִיל; וַיִּקַּד הָעָם, וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ.

**27** that ye shall say: It is the sacrifice of  
the LORD'S passover, for that He passed  
over the houses of the children of Israel in  
Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and  
delivered our houses.' And the people  
bowed the head and worshipped.

Mechilta

רשע מה הוא אומר מה העבודה הזאת לכם לכם ולא לו ולפי שהוציא את עצמו מן הכלל וכפר  
בעיקר אף אתה הקהה את שיניו ואמור לו בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים (שמות יג ח)  
לי ולא לך אלו היית שם לא היית נגאל.

**“To you’ and not to himself. And because he separated himself from the  
community and he rejects that which is essential [i.e., is guilty of heresy]  
Also you must blunt his teeth and say: Because of this G-d acted for me.  
For me, and not for that man; had that man been in Egypt he would not  
have been worthy of redemption from there**

Emphasis was clearly placed on the word “you”. The tone of voice in the Mechilta is quite different from the tone used by the rasha in the Yerushalmi, where the wicked son asks:

### Jerusalem Talmud Pesachim Ch. 10

דף ע,ב פרק י הלכה ד גמרא תני ר' חייה כנגד ארבעה בנים דיברה תורה בן חכם  
בן רשע בן טיפש בן שאינו יודע לשאול. בן חכם מהו אומר (דברים ו) מה העדות  
והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה ה' אלהינו אותנו אף אתה אמור לו (שמות יג) בחזק  
יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים מבית עבדים. בן רשע מהו אומר (שמות יב) מה העבודה  
הזאת לכם מה הטורח הזה שאתם מטריחין עלינו בכל שנה ושנה

What is this service to you [or, of yours]?

*What is this toil with which we are burdened each and every year?*

מכיון שהוציא את עצמו מן הכלל אף אתה אמור לו (שם) בעבור זה עשה ה' לי עשה  
לאותו האיש לא עשה. אילו היה אותו האיש במצרים לא היה ראוי להגאל  
משם לעולם

Because of this, because of my offering the Pesach sacrifice, G-d acted for me.  
For me, and not for that man; had that man been in Egypt he would not have  
been worthy of redemption from there for eternity.

In this case, our sages impart some of the significance of the ritual which the wicked son questions. The wicked son of the Jerusalem Talmud is condemned for questioning the efficacy or relevance of Jewish ritual, whereas the Mechilta's wicked son is condemned for separating himself from the community.

### TWO TRADITIONS – TWO WICKED SONS

Interestingly, the Mechilta offers this teaching anonymously, while the Yerushalmi presents this teaching in the name of Rav Chiya. The version in the Mechilta is certainly the original source, as Rav Chiya in the Yerushalmi makes reference to it.

Rav Chiya clearly utilizes the teaching in the Mechilta, as can be seen from his second sentence, “Since he separated himself from the community,” a statement which does not relate to the efficacy of ‘service’ and is a clear reflection of the Mechilta’s understanding of the wicked son’s crime of separation. Thus, Rav Chiya created a new teaching which compounded the rebellion of the rasha: Not only is he guilty of separating himself from the

community, he also questions the necessity of the Paschal service.

### **The same basic process occurred in the original Mechilta**

The sages who formulated the Mechilta had consciously created their own teaching in a similar manner. **They rejected the biblical response to the son and insisted that such a question, such a questioner, is wicked, apparently reacting to the philosophical trends which must have been current during the formation of the Midrash and served as the model for this dialogue.** There must have been dissidents on the fringe of the Jewish community who articulated their ideology in this manner.

**One Judeo-Christian sect considered itself completely "Jewish," but would not take sides politically in the struggle against Rome. To this sect, our Sages may very well have said:**

To you and not to himself. And because he separated himself from the community and he rejects that which is essential [i.e., is guilty of heresy]...

### **The sages condemn this political neutrality as incompatible with Jewish identity:**

**One who separates himself from Jewish destiny also cuts himself` off from Jewish history. He cannot remain in the religious community if he takes no part in the historical community and does not feel the historical continuity which begins with the Exodus and culminates in the final messianic redemption. Such a Jew, the sages of the Mechilta intimate, would not have been redeemed from Egypt; such a Jew would possibly have expressed sympathy for Egypt. He may even have refused to take part in the Exodus.**

According to historians there were two occasions when the Judaic Christians separated themselves from the community.

One was the battle against Rome in 68 CE which culminated in the destruction of the Temple. The second occasion was during the Bar Kochva rebellion some 60 years later. We can clearly see why the Judaic Christians failed to rally around Bar Kochva, a man labeled "The King Messiah" by no less of an authority than the great Rabbi Akiva. **The Christians felt that they already had their Messiah and had nothing at stake in this parochial battle between the Jews and Rome. At**

just the time of these events, the Mechilta was formulated. It then comes as no surprise that the rifts in the Jewish community are reflected in the Midrash.

### THE EXTRA 'VAV'

The sages who later compiled the Haggadah created their own unique teaching by dropping off one letter which appears in the Mechilta. The Mechilta version has an extra letter (in the Hebrew text; in the English it becomes an entire word) as compared to the version in the Haggada. The Haggada equates the wicked son's heresy with his separation from the community:

רָשַׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֲבוּדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם. לָכֶם – וְלֹא לוֹ. וְלִפִּי  
שֶׁהוֹצִיא אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִן הַכֹּלל כְּפָר בְּעֵקֶר. וְאִף אֶתְּהָה הַקָּהָה אֶת שִׁנּוּי  
וְאָמֹר לוֹ: "בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצִאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם". לִי וְלֹא לּוֹ. אֱלוֹ  
הָיָה שָׁם, לֹא הָיָה נִגְאָל:

The] wicked [son], what does he say: What is this service to you [or, of yours]? To you and not to himself. **And because he separated himself from the community [he] rejects that which is essential [i.e., is guilty of heresy]**

### Mechilta

רשע מה הוא אומר מה העבודה הזאת לכם לכם ולא לו ולפי שהוציא את עצמו מן הכלל וכפר  
בעיקר אף אתה הקהה את שינוי ואמור לו בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים (שמות יג ח)  
לי ולא לך אלו היית שם לא היית נגאל.

'To you' and not to himself. **And because he separated himself from the community and he rejects that which is essential [i.e., is guilty of heresy]**  
Also you must blunt his teeth and say: Because of this G-d acted for me. For me, and not for that man; had that man been in Egypt he would not have been worthy of redemption from there

Rav Ari Kahn: In the Mechilta the word "and" (in Hebrew, the letter "Vav") is added: he separates himself, in addition to already being guilty of heresy! First, this son accepted the Christian belief. Now, he separates himself from the community:

The Haggadah, in omitting the word “and”, subtly changes the message brought across by Rav Hiya in the Yerushalmi. The wicked son is now guilty solely of separating himself from the community; **the issues of Christian belief are no longer the current problems which the sages sought to battle.**

### Jewish Virtual Library

Through the generations the Passover *Haggadah* has been one of the most popular works – perhaps the most popular – in Jewish religious literature. Many recensions, differing from one another to a greater or lesser degree, have been preserved in various manuscripts mostly dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and also in fragments from the Cairo *Genizah*.

Rav Kahn: The wicked son of the Jerusalem Talmud has other historical parallels in Judeo-Christian theology. We know of the early Christians' objection to the entire practice of sacrifice, and of the particular significance they credited to the Pesach sacrifice. It is not difficult for us to associate the Christian concept of the obsolescence of sacrifice after the crucifixion with the point of view of the wicked son in the Yerushalmi. In stressing the word “service”, he asks specifically why the sacrifice must continue to be offered year after year; implying that its utility is outdated. The new symbol of redemption, the “ultimate Paschal lamb”, has made continued sacrifice unnecessary according to this view. It is to this specific claim that the Sages in the Yerushalmi respond:

### Book of John Ch. 1

**29**The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

**30**This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

**31**And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

**32**And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

**33**And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

**34**And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

**35**Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

**36**And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

## Rabbi Tovia Singer's "Outreach Judaism" Website – Q and A

**Q: Why have the Jewish people rejected Jesus as their sacrificial lamb who is the sin bearer for mankind when the atoning blood of Jesus is so everpresent in the Paschal lamb in the Book of Exodus. I ask this question because you are a rabbi and profess to believe in the teachings of the Old Testament; so how is it that you do not see the atonement of the blood of the lamb which was placed on the doorposts that first Passover Seder night in Egypt? I look forward to your answer.**

### Answer:

Evangelical Christians often draw a comparison between the Paschal Lamb and Jesus, insisting that the former foreshadows the latter. This idea is advanced in the New Testament, particularly in the fourth Gospel, where John portrayed Jesus as the fulfillment of the Passover lamb. Yet how valid a point is this? What is the meaning of this holiday sacrifice? Is there a relationship between this festival offering and atonement for sin?

The Bible relates in Exodus 12:3-13 that as the Jewish people were preparing themselves for the momentous Exodus from Egypt, God commanded them to slaughter a year-old sheep or goat on the 14th day of the first month (Nissan). They were to place its blood on the outside doorposts of their homes. Because Christians insist that the blood of the Paschal lamb foreshadowed the atonement of the blood of Jesus at Calvary, it behooves us to question the soundness of this claim.

**The Passover lamb did not atone for sin and accordingly, this idea is nowhere to be found in the Jewish Scriptures. It goes without saying that the notion that the Paschal Lamb is a representation of a crucified savior or an atonement is alien to the teachings of the Torah and is not even mentioned by the first three Gospels.**

**A mindful study of the Jewish Scriptures reveals that the Paschal Lamb was alluded to long before the Exodus from Egypt.** Centuries earlier, Abraham's faith was tested by God when he commanded him to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac. Genesis 22:7-8 relates that as the two ascended Mount Moriah together, Isaac asked his father,

**"Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the offering?" Abraham then replied, "God will see to a lamb for an offering, my son."**

(Genesis 22:7-8)

The question that comes to mind is, what happened to that lamb that Abraham promised? A few verses later we find that ram was sacrificed rather than a lamb! Where was the lamb to which Abraham was prophetically referring?

The answer of course is that our father Abraham was prophetically alluding to the Paschal lamb. Just as God tested Abraham's faith to demonstrate his worthiness to be the father of the chosen people, the young Jewish nation also had to have their faith tested to show their worthiness to participate in the exodus from Egypt, receive the Torah at Mount Sinai, and emerge as the progenitors of the covenant people who would forever be known as "a light to the nations."

During the period of the Exodus in Ancient Egypt, the lamb was deified and worshiped as a god. By Egyptian law, it was therefore forbidden to harm a lamb in any way; such an act was considered a crime punishable by death.

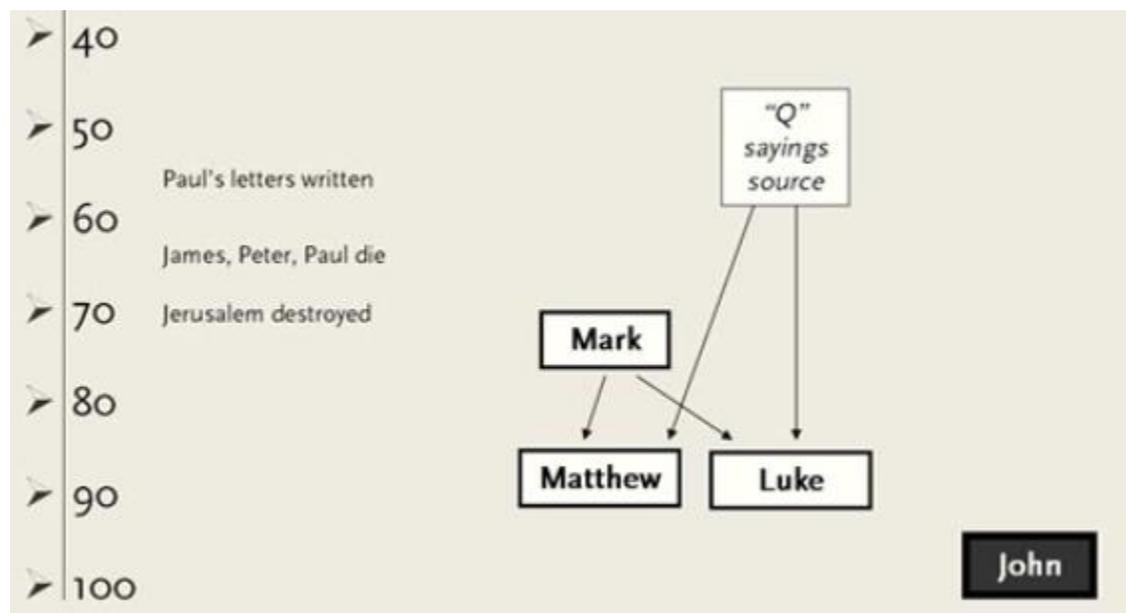
For this reason, Moses refused Pharaoh's initial offer that the Jews bring their sacrifice to God while remaining in Egypt, following the third plague of lice. Moses explained to Pharaoh that it would be impossible for his people to sacrifice these animals in this land because the Egyptians would execute us for carrying out this ceremony (Exodus 8:25-26).

The Almighty, therefore, tested the faithfulness of the Jewish people by commanding them to kill Egypt's cherished god, and place the lamb's blood on their doorposts, displayed for all of their neighbors to see. Only those Israelites who, like Abraham, demonstrated that they feared nothing but the God of Israel were deemed worthy to have their homes "passed over" during the tenth and final plague.

It is worth noting that the synoptic gospels, i.e. the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, do not associate Jesus with the Paschal Lamb. The Book of John, on the other hand, draws a clear link between the two (John 1:29-34). The synoptic Gospels insist that Jesus was crucified on the first day of Passover – the 15<sup>th</sup> day of Nissan. Written several decades after the synoptic Gospels, John's author accordingly has Jesus crucified on the eve of Passover, the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nissan, when the lambs were slaughtered. As a result, the Passover Seder is noticeably absent in John's Passion Narrative.

Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Tovia Singer



In the year 70, Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple, effectively ending a Jewish revolt against the Empire that had begun four years earlier.

Although some scholars disagree, the vast majority of researchers believe that Mark was the first Gospel to be written, sometime around the year 70.

This scholarly consensus holds that the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke were composed, independently of one another, sometime in the 80s or 90s. Both used a written form of the Gospel of Mark as source material for their own narratives. In addition, because both Matthew and Luke contain a large amount of material in common that is not found in Mark, most researchers hold that both Evangelists also had a collection of Jesus' sayings that they incorporated into their works. This saying source is known as "Q" and was likely assembled in the 40s or 50s. This understanding of the origins of the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke explains why they are similar yet different from one another. The arrangement is called "The Two-Source Hypothesis" because Matthew and Luke are seen to have two written sources, Mark and Q.

**The Gospel of John emerges from an independent literary tradition that is not directly connected to the Synoptic tradition.** This explains the major differences between John and the Synoptics. The Johannine narrative is indebted to oral and possibly written traditions that were transmitted from earlier decades.

### Jerusalem Talmud Pesachim Ch. 10

דף ע,ב פרק י הלכה ד גמרא תני ר' חייא כנגד ארבעה בנים דיברה תורה בן חכם  
בן רשע בן טיפש בן שאינו יודע לשאול. בן חכם מהו אומר (דברים ו) מה העדות  
והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה ה' אלהינו אותנו אף אתה אמור לו (שמות יג) בחזק  
יד הוציאנו ה' ממצרים מבית עבדים. בן רשע מהו אומר (שמות יב) מה העבודה  
הזאת לכם מה הטורח הזה שאתם מטריחין עלינו בכל שנה ושנה

What is this service to you [or, of yours]?

*What is this toil with which we are burdened each and every year?*

מכיון שהוציא את עצמו מן הכלל אף אתה אמור לו (שם) בעבור זה עשה ה' לי לי  
עשה לאותו האיש לא עשה. אילו היה אותו האיש במצרים לא היה ראוי להגאל  
משם לעולם

G-d acted for me; for me and not for that man. Had that man been in Egypt he would not have been worthy of redemption from there for eternity.

Rav Ari Kahn: 'That man', אותו האיש, the Christian answer to Paschal sacrifice, was not himself worthy of redemption; it would therefore be absurd to believe that his life or his death could redeem others. This is the theological answer to Judeo-Christian theology.

It is fascinating to trace Rav Chiya's adaptation of the earlier teaching to match the rasha of his own day. In a sense, this process of adaptation has been applied for generations. The rasha remains a dissident, either at the edge of, or outside of the Jewish community. Mainly

through artistic representations, we have clear evidence how the face of the rasha has evolved, to match that which was considered askance in a particular place or time.

The rasha in the Mechilta “won” over his relative in the Yerushalmi, and serves as the direct source for the formulation incorporated in the Haggadah, most likely for a number of reasons: The Mechilta enjoyed a greater sphere of influence, it represents the original formulation, and its teaching seems somewhat broader. Nonetheless, we have noted the slight change which was made upon incorporation in the Haggada, labeling the wicked son’s separation as his heresy as opposed to being in addition to his heresy. Ostensibly, this change was made in order to fashion a generic rasha who could be used as an example of infamy at Sedarim for millennia.