**Psalm 118:27**

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/ps/ps-118/psalm-11827/>

The psalmist completes his poetic narrative with a declaration that the LORD is God and has given us light. He presents a final scene depicting a festival sacrifice offered in love to God for rescuing him.

 The language used is prophetic of Jesus the Messiah, who is both the Light of the world and our Passover sacrifice.

King David, the likely psalmist, concludes his poetic narrative with two declarations and an exhortation to worship.

The first of these final declarations is: The LORD is God (v 27a).

Amidst the polytheistic nations surround Israel, the main thrust of the psalmist’s declaration is: the LORD (Yahweh) is God alone.

It is a confession of the core Jewish belief: “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!” (Deuteronomy 6:4). Jesus agreed with what was apparently the common belief among Jews during His time of ministry on earth, that this is the first and greatest commandment (Matthew 22:35-37).

This verse from Deuteronomy is the opening line of “the Shema” given by Moses. Shema means “listen” or “hear.” The Shema was and still is a prayer which the people of Israel pray each morning and evening. The Psalmist edits the first statement of the Shema: The LORD is God, anticipating that every Israelite will fill in the second half: “the LORD is one!” (Deuteronomy 6:4). This statement is also a declaration of the LORD’s authority as God. The LORD and the LORD alone is the One who is in charge and has dominion over all things.

The second thing the psalmist declares is: and He has given us light (v 27a).  
(“Hosanna/We are saved!”)

Light is a common metaphor for truth or understanding. Light illuminates. It helps us see our surroundings and circumstances more clearly. Elsewhere in the psalms, it says: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). God has given us the light of His commandments and word. The revelation of this light is an expression of His grace to us.

The psalmist’s statement is also prophetic of the Messiah.

Jesus the Messiah, is “the Light of the world [and] he who follows [Him] will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). He was and is “the true Light, which, coming into the world, enlightens every man” (John 1:9). God sent us Jesus the Messiah to not only offer us eternal life (John 3:16), but to teach us how to live as God intended us to live—by trusting God.

Next, the psalmist poetically narrates his worshipful response to God’s authority and grace,

Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar (v 27b).

Having been miraculously rescued from his distress (Psalm 118:5, Psalm 118:12-14), and having proclaimed the LORD’s saving valiance with joyful shouts in his battle tents and a triumphal entry through the city gates (Psalm 118:16-17, Psalm 118:15, Psalm 118:19-20), the psalmist makes good on his promise to give thanks (Psalm 118:21) by making a sacrifice.

For those who follow the LORD, the proper response to God’s goodness and power is worship, celebration, and sacrifice. The expression bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar refers to the ritualistic offering of animal sacrifices unto the LORD upon the altar. The animal would be fastened to the altar with cords during the sacrifice to ensure that it did not fall off the altar and become impure. The horns of the altar were part of the altar construction. A number of examples have been found in archeology ([see photo](https://thebiblesays.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Altar.jpg)).

To bind a sacrifice commits it to be sacrificed. Isaac submitted to be bound and laid upon an altar by his father (Genesis 22:9). In Jewish tradition this event is called “The Binding.” The submission of Isaac is a prophetic picture of Jesus, who submitted to be sacrificed upon the cross (Hebrews 10:5-7).

The psalmist calls this a festival sacrifice, which means that the sacrifice he had in mind was likely one of the sacrifices that were offered during one of Israel’s holy days. In addition to the weekly Sabbath, there are seven festival holy days described in the Torah that Israel was to observe (Leviticus 23:4-36):

1. Pesach (Passover)  
   (Leviticus 23:5)
2. Chag HaMatzot (Unleavened Bread)  
   (Leviticus 23:6-8)
3. Yom Bikkurim (First Fruits)  
   (Leviticus 23:10-14)
4. Shavuot (Pentecost/Feast of Weeks)  
   (Leviticus 23:15-22)
5. Rosh HaShanah (Feast of Trumpets)  
   (Leviticus 23:24-25)
6. Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)  
   (Leviticus 23:27-32)
7. Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles)  
   (Leviticus 23:34-36)

[To read more about the feasts of Israel, also called The Lord's appointed times, see our commentary on Leviticus 23](https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/lev/lev-23/)

David’s inclusion of the festival sacrifice further indicates how Psalm 118 was regularly sung during festivals, and therefore familiar to all Israel. For an Israelite, Psalm 118’s familiarity would have been comparable to a beloved Christmas carol in Western culture.

Psalm 118:27 is prophetic of Jesus the Messiah in several ways:

The LORD is God, and He has given us light;

Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.

1. Jesus the Messiah is the LORD (Yahweh).  
   (Mark 14:62, John 8:58, Revelation 1:8, 22:13)
2. Jesus the Messiah is God.  
   (Matthew 16:16, 27:54, John 1:1, 14, Philippians 2:6, Colossians 1:15-19)
3. Jesus the Messiah is the “Light of the World.”  
   (John 1:5, 9, 8:12, 1 John 1:5)
4. Jesus the Messiah is given to us by God as a Light to show us how to live in harmony with Him.  
   (Matthew 4:15-16, John 1:10, 3:17-21, 1 John 1:6-7)
5. Jesus the Messiah was our Festival Sacrifice.

Jesus was “the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). He is “our Passover” (1 Corinthians 5:7). Moreover, Jesus was executed during the week of Passover (John 18:28).

[To learn more about how Jesus was our Passover Lamb, see The Bible Says’ article: “Jesus and the Messianic Fulfillments of Passover and Unleavened Bread.”](https://thebiblesays.com/tough-topics/jesus-and-the-messianic-fulfillments-of-passover-and-unleavened-bread/)

It is sobering to reflect that even in the triumphant portion of this psalm (Psalm 118:19-27) there is a sacrificial death. For the psalmist, it is the death of an animal such as a sheep or goat. But in a prophetic sense, the festival sacrifice refers to the death of God’s Son, Jesus.

Even as Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem with the Hosanna shouts of Psalm 118:25-26 ringing in the streets, He was offering Himself as the festival sacrifice who would be arrested (Matthew 26:47-56); falsely condemned (Matthew 26:57-68); bound (Matthew 27:2), and shamefully paraded to His death on a cross (John 19:16-17).

The poetic narrative of the celebratory Psalm 118 ends by presenting the triumphant Messiah in an apparent moment of defeat. But Jesus triumphed because He suffered well (Isaiah 53:10-12, Philippians 2:5-11, Hebrews 12:1-2).

Faithfully suffering for the LORD’s sake is to be our path to triumph as well—by following Jesus’s example of entrusting Himself to God no matter what—even unto death (Matthew 20:26-28, Luke 9:23-26, Romans 8:17-18, 2 Timothy 2:12, 1 Peter 4:12-13, 19, Revelation 2:10-11).

1. Jesus the Messiah, was bound with cords.  
   (Matthew 27:2)
2. Jesus the Messiah, was nailed to the cross (the altar upon which He was the festival sacrifice).(Matthew 27:15-16, Luke 23:17-18, John 20:25, 26, Colossians 2:14).

**Biblical Text**

**27 The LORD is God, and He has given us light;  
Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.**