

# 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](#)).

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](#)

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."](#)

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).

6. Jesus the Messiah, was bound *with cords*.  
(Matthew 27:2)
7. 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**

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