

Q 5.2 Did Jesus Eat Lamb at Passover?

There is no direct evidence anywhere in Scripture of Jesus ever eating lamb. The evidence within Scripture, combined with the historic evidence outside the Bible, overwhelmingly suggests He did not eat lamb at Passover. It even suggests He passionately opposed the paschal bloodshed and flesh-eating ritual.

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Introduction

A common refutation to veganism is the claim that Jesus ate lamb at least once per year during Passover, and that if Jesus ate lamb, it is thereby acceptable for His followers today to likewise eat lamb, or to eat any other creature. A thorough examination of the evidence, however, does not support this claim. Let's start by briefly outlining the Passover tradition as recorded in Exodus.

Origin of The Passover Tradition, According to the Exodus Scribes

According to the Book of Exodus, the Passover tradition originated just before the Israelites fled from their Egyptian captivity. Pharaoh would not release the captive Israelites to Moses,¹ which caused the LORD to send nine plagues on Egypt, but Pharaoh still wouldn't release the captive Israelites to Moses.² The tenth and final plague was the death of every firstborn in Egypt.³ In order to protect themselves from this plague, the Israelites living in Egypt sacrificed a lamb without blemish⁴ in their homes on the fourteenth day of the first month of the year, *"And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight"* (Exodus 12:6, ESV). They spread the lamb's blood on their doorposts,⁵ causing the plague to 'pass over' their household.⁶ When this plague happened,⁷ it caused Pharaoh to release the Israelites from bondage,⁸ beginning their forty

¹ "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites go out of his country.'" (Exodus 6:10-11, NIV).

² "And you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness'; but indeed, until now you would not hear!'" (Exodus 7:16, NKJV).

³ "And every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle" (Exodus 11:5, ESV).

⁴ "Your lamb shall be without blemish" (Exodus 12:5a, NKJV).

⁵ "Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs" (Exodus 12:7, NIV).

⁶ "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt" (Exodus 12:12-13, NIV).

⁷ "And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead" (Exodus 12:30, ESV).

⁸ "Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, 'Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the LORD as you have said.'" (Exodus 12:31, NKJV).

year Exodus toward the promised land.⁹ Sacrificing and eating a lamb¹⁰ on this particular day each year became the annual Passover tradition, as a reminder of the LORD freeing them from Egyptian captivity, *“This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance”* (Exodus 12:14, NIV). After the construction of the tabernacle, the tradition changed such that the lamb was no longer sacrificed in individual homes but instead at the tabernacle,¹¹ which was later replaced by the temple.¹²

The Argument in Favor of Jesus Eating Lamb at Passover

The claim is that all Jews in Jesus’ time ate lamb once each year as part of the Passover tradition and that Jesus therefore would have definitely eaten lamb each year as part of this tradition. According to Luke, Jesus and His parents went to the temple in Jerusalem each year to observe Passover: *“Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom”* (Luke 2:41-42, NIV). According to Mark, Jesus and His disciples continued to observe Passover even up to the end of His life: *“On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus’ disciples asked him, ‘Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?’”* (Mark 14:12, NIV). Many take these passages to be conclusive

⁹ “I brought you up out of Egypt and led you forty years in the wilderness to give you the land of the Amorites” (Amos 2:10, NIV).

¹⁰ “That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast” (Exodus 12:8, NIV).

¹¹ “You are not to sacrifice the Passover animal in any of the towns that the LORD your God is giving you. You must only offer the Passover sacrifice at the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for His Name. Do this in the evening as the sun sets, at the same time you departed from Egypt” (Deuteronomy 16:5-6, BSB).

¹² “They slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed and consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings to the temple of the LORD” (2 Chronicles 30:15, NIV).

evidence that Jesus ate lamb at least this one time each year of His life. While it is certainly reasonable to draw this conclusion if only considering these few passages, there is no direct evidence anywhere in the Bible or elsewhere saying that Jesus ate lamb; and there is a comparatively overwhelming amount of evidence that suggests He would not have participated in the part of the Passover custom that involved killing and eating lamb. Such evidence begins with Jeremiah the Prophet and his rejection of the Exodus Scribes version of the Passover story.

Origin of The Passover Tradition, According to Jeremiah the Prophet

In the seventh century BCE Jeremiah's father, Hilkiah the High Priest, found a lost Torah scroll hidden away in the temple, *"Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, 'I have found the Book of the Law [Torah] in the house of the LORD!' And he gave it to Shaphan, who read it"* (2 Kings 22:8, BSB). Upon reading it, he showed it to King Josiah, who immediately instituted a series of reforms.¹³ Jeremiah then wrote extensively against the sacrificial system, claiming God never commanded the Passover sacrifice when He brought the Israelites out of Egypt, *"For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you'"* (Jeremiah 7:22-23, NKJV). Jeremiah claims that lying scribes invented the story, *"How can you say, 'We are wise, and the Law [Torah] of the LORD is with us,' when in fact the lying pen of the scribes has produced a deception?"* (Jeremiah 8:8, BSB). So according to Jeremiah, the Passover tradition originated with the pen of lying scribes.

¹³ "Go and inquire of the LORD for me, for the people, and for all Judah concerning the words in this book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that burns against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book by doing all that is written about us" (2 Kings 22:13, BSB).

Jesus' Trip to the Temple at Passover

According to the torah scribes, The Paschal lamb was required to be sacrificed only at the temple, *"You must only offer the Passover sacrifice at the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for His Name"* (Deuteronomy 16:5-6, BSB). This is what the Sadducees were in charge of at Herod's temple in Jesus' time. All four gospels relate an account of Jesus making a trip to the temple on Passover, but not for the purpose of paying homage to the Sadducees and their temple slaughter ritual. It was instead to disrupt and oppose it. He went into the temple, liberated the animals being sold there for sacrifice, overturned the tables of those who were selling the animals, and commanded them to *"get these out of here!"*¹⁴ He called the blood-sacrificing priesthood of Sadducees a den of violence, saying the temple is supposed to be a house of prayer, not a slaughterhouse marketplace, *"Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. 'It is written,' he said to them, 'My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it 'a den of פְּרִיזָּה (pā-ri-ṣîm)'"* (Matthew 21:12-13, NIV).¹⁵ The 'den of violence' is a quote from Jeremiah 7:11, in the context of Jeremiah claiming God never commanded the Passover sacrifice and that lying scribes produced a deception. Jesus even walked to His own death on that Passover eve, alongside the slaughtered paschal lambs.¹⁶

No Lamb Mentioned at the Dinner Table

When indicating the contents of the food on the table at the last supper meal, bread and wine were mentioned, but not lamb. As author Stephen Webb points

¹⁴ "To those selling doves He said, 'Get these out of here! How dare you turn My Father's house into a marketplace!'" (John 2:16, BSB).

¹⁵ Strong's Hebrew: 6530 [פְּרִיזָּה (parits) — 6 Occurrences], which means 'violence.'

¹⁶ "Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath" (John 19:31, NKJV).

out, *“the missing lamb is a crucial ingredient for understanding not only the meaning of the Last Supper but also the significance of Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection.”*¹⁷ Instead, Jesus used bread—not lamb—to indicate that His own body that was soon to be offered up to God was to be their Passover lamb, *“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body’”* (Matthew 26:26, NIV). Paul confirms Jesus as the Passover lamb: *“For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed”* (1 Corinthians 5:7b, NIV), as does Peter when he refers to Jesus as, *“a lamb without blemish or defect”* (1 Peter 1:19, NIV). Also John the Baptist announced Jesus as the Passover lamb: *“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29, ESV). If there was also a physical lamb present at the meal, then there would have strangely been two Passover lambs at the last supper—Jesus and the actual lamb. And if the body of an actual lamb was on the table as part of the meal, Jesus would have used that to demonstrate His own body being offered up as the Lamb of God—but instead He used bread. As author Geoffrey Rudd rightly puts it, if lamb had been part of the meal, *“He would have mentioned the lamb, and not Bread as the symbol of the Divine Passion in which the Lamb of God was slain for the sins of the world.”*¹⁸

Was Jesus a Pharisee, Sadducee, or Essene?

At the time of Jesus, there were three distinct forms of Judaism: Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. The Pharisees were the scribes and teachers of the law in control of the synagogues. The Sadducees were the animal-sacrificing

¹⁷ Webb, Stephen H. “Didn’t Jesus Eat Lamb? The Last Supper and the Case of the Missing Meat.” In *A Faith Embracing All Creatures: Addressing Commonly Asked Questions about Christian Care for Animals*. Edited by Tripp York and Andy Alexis-Baker, 53-63. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012, page 54.

¹⁸ Rudd, Geoffrey L. *Why Kill for Food?* Wilmslow, Cheshire: The Vegetarian Society, 1956, p. 87-88.

priests in control of the temple. And the Essenes were the communal ascetics living in poor monastic villages. Jesus was highly critical of the Pharisees and Sadducees, warning His followers to guard against their teachings, *“Then they understood that He was not telling them to beware of the leaven used in bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees”* (Matthew 16:12, BSB). He opposed the Sadducees and disrupted their system of ritual animal slaughter, calling them a den of violent ones.¹⁹ He taught that one's righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees, *“For I tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 5:20, BSB). The Essenes were known for their righteousness exceeding all other forms of Judaism.²⁰ While harshly criticizing and warning against the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus never spoke a single word against the Essenes.

Comparing the Essenes with Jesus and the Apostles

Jesus not only opposed the groups the Essenes separated themselves from, but also taught His disciples to live in ways that closely align with the Essenes, *“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had”* (Acts 4:32, NIV). They despised wealth, embraced voluntary poverty, dressed and lived modestly, gave charitably to those in need, shared all possessions in common, embraced strangers, broke bread together daily that was blessed by the community leader, refrained from anger and from swearing oaths, and steadfastly followed the decisions of the community leader.²¹ In Essene communities, as recorded by first century historian Josephus, *“all things are held in common; so that a rich man enjoys no more of his own wealth than he who has nothing at*

¹⁹ See Matthew 21:12-13, where Jesus quotes Jeremiah 7:11

²⁰ See Philo, Every Good Man is Free, 12.75

²¹ For biblical and historical evidence of each of these points, see Appendix Chart: Comparing the Essenes with Jesus and the Apostles.

all.”²² These striking similarities suggest Jesus was much more likely Essene rather than Sadducee or Pharisee. For a more detailed comparison, see the *Appendix: Comparing the Essenes with Jesus and the Apostles*.

Evidence for Essene Primacy

Some contemporary historians try to place the beginning of the Essenes around 200 BCE, treating them as an Intertestamental offshoot form of Judaism, but the oldest testimonies we have concerning the Essenes suggest a much earlier inception. There are multiple first and second century reports that the Essene beliefs and practices have been handed down through an unbroken succession reaching all the way back to the most ancient times. First century Natural Historian Pliny the Elder reports that the Essenes have continued for thousands of years, solely through discipleship, without procreating, “*through thousands of ages (incredible to relate) a race in which no one is born lives on forever—so prolific for their advantage is other men’s weariness of life!*”²³ First century Jewish Historian Flavius Josephus claims the Essene beliefs and practices, “*endured for so long among them and has never been interrupted since they adopted them from of old.*”²⁴ Late second century Christian Historian Hippolytus of Rome likewise testifies that Essene history, “*is of greater antiquity than that of all nations.*”²⁵ These testimonies from nearly two thousand years ago each attest to the Essenes being the most ancient community. These are especially important witnesses because they are from the vantage point of what we today—nearly two thousand years later—would consider ancient!²⁶ So if these ancient writers each

²² Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.20

²³ Pliny, *Natural History* 5.15. T.r. H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge-Harvard University Press, 1942, p. 277.

²⁴ Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.18-22

²⁵ Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 9.22.4

²⁶ Another significant point is that all three of these sources are from outsiders (non-Essenes). In the case of Pliny the Elder, his testimony is what historians refer to as a ‘hostile witness,’ meaning he was not only an outsider but an opponent who spoke

saw the Essenes as the most ancient group, even from their own ancient perspective, that suggests the Essenes have a stronger claim than any other group (including Pharisees or Sadducees) to being the original and direct successors of the holy prophets of Scripture and their righteous teachings. The Essenes were not later offshoots—they were the original sect.

Essenes Rejected Animal Slaughter and Flesh-Eating

It is attested by multiple sources that the Essenes rejected animal slaughter and the eating of flesh. Fourth century church historian Epiphanius says the Essene community *“bans burnt offerings and sacrifices, as something foreign to God and never offered to Him on the authority of the fathers and Law,”* and *“rejects the Jewish custom of eating meat and the rest, and the altar, and fire as something foreign to God.”*²⁷ First century Jewish historian Philo of Alexandria says similarly of the Essenes, *“they are above all men devoted to the service of God, not sacrificing living animals, but studying rather to preserve their own minds in a state of holiness and purity.”*²⁸ First century Jewish historian Josephus agrees, *“they do not offer sacrifices.”*²⁹ Fourth century church writer Jerome states likewise, *“they practised perpetual abstinence from wives, wine, and flesh, and made a second nature of their daily fast.”*³⁰ The earliest sources all agree the Essenes did not practice animal sacrifice or flesh-eating.

disparagingly about the Essenes, saying their only friends are palm trees. Since all three sources agree, including their opponent, that they have the most legitimate claim to being the most ancient community, this raises the evidence to the level of historical fact.

²⁷ Epiphanius, *Panarion* 19.3.6

²⁸ Philo, *Every Good Man is Free*, 12.75

²⁹ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.1.5

³⁰ Jerome, *Against Jovinianus* 2.14. T.r. by W.H. Fremantle, G. Lewis and W.G. Martley. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 6. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893.

The Family and Disciples of Jesus Did Not Eat Flesh

The historical evidence also suggests that the family of Jesus did not eat flesh. The *Protoevangelium of James* is the earliest account of Jesus' mother Mary's upbringing. It says her parents, Joachim and Anna, "*allowed nothing common or unclean to pass through her*" in her first three years of life.³¹ Then in her next nine years of life, "*she received food from the hand of an angel.*"³² According to another early church source, Jesus' brother James likewise never ate animal flesh, "*He was holy from his mother's womb; and he drank no wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat flesh.*"³³ His other brother, Judas Thomas, "*continually fasts and prays, and eats only bread with salt, and his drink is water.*"³⁴ According to fourth century church historian Eusebius, every single one of Jesus' disciples abstained from flesh-eating, "*they embraced and persevered in a strenuous and a laborious life, with fasting and abstinence from wine and meat.*"³⁵ This all suggests Jesus and His family were raised Essene, abstaining from flesh-eating from birth, and that He taught His followers to live likewise.

Conclusion

There is no direct evidence anywhere in the Bible or in the historical record of Jesus ever eating lamb. At best there are a few passages that suggest it may have been possible. But the totality of the evidence overwhelmingly supports Jesus, His family, and His followers being Essenes who opposed flesh-eating

³¹ *Protoevangelium of James* 6. See Acts 10:14 where this phrase is used by Peter to denote his refusal to eat animal flesh.

³² *Protoevangelium of James* 8. See Psalm 78:24-25 and Numbers 11:7-8 where angel's food is described as manna.

³³ Hegesippus, quoted in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.5- T.r. by Arthur Cushman McGiffert. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 1. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1890.

³⁴ Acts of Thomas. Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Revelations. 1870, p.399

³⁵ Eusebius. *Demonstratio Evangelica* 3.5. T.r. by W.J. Ferrar, 1920.

and animal sacrifice. Therefore it would be contrary to the evidence to attempt to justify flesh-eating by claiming that Jesus ate lamb.

Appendix: Comparing the Essenes with Jesus and the Apostles

Essenes	Jesus and Apostles
"And they despise wealth" ³⁶	"But woe to you who are rich" (Luke 6:24, BSB).
"they alone of almost all men having been originally poor and destitute, and that too rather from their own habits and ways of life than from any real deficiency of good fortune, are nevertheless accounted very rich, judging contentment and frugality to be great abundance." ³⁷	"Looking up at His disciples, Jesus said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God' (Luke 6:20, BSB); Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21, BSB).
"and do not turn away from sharing their goods with those that are destitute." ³⁸	"If anyone with earthly possessions sees his brother in need, but withholds his compassion from him, how can the love of God abide in him?" (1 John 3:17, BSB) ³⁹
"No one amongst them, however, enjoys a greater amount of riches than another. For a regulation with them is, that an individual coming forward to join the sect	"All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need" (Acts 2:44-45, BSB) ⁴¹

³⁶ Late 2nd century Christian Theologian, Hippolytus of Rome, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 9.14. From "The Early Church Fathers and Other Works" originally published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. in English in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1867.

³⁷ Philo, *Every Good Man is Free*, 12

³⁸ Late 2nd century Christian Theologian, Hippolytus of Rome, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 9.14. From "The Early Church Fathers and Other Works" originally published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. in English in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1867.

³⁹ See also James 2:15-16; Matthew 25:35-40.

⁴¹ See also Acts 4:32-35; Luke 12:33-34; Luke 18:22; Matthew 19:21.

must sell his possessions, and present the price of them to the community.” ⁴⁰	
“And on receiving the money, the head of the order distributes it to all according to their necessities. Thus there is no one among them in distress.” ⁴²	“There were no needy ones among them, because those who owned lands or houses would sell their property, bring the proceeds from the sales, and lay them at the apostles’ feet for distribution to anyone as he had need” (Acts 4:34-35, BSB)
“But there is not one city of them, but many of them settle in every city. And if any of the adherents of the sect may be present from a strange place, they consider that all things are in common for him, and those whom they had not previously known they receive as if they belonged to their own household and kindred.” ⁴³	“Whatever house you enter, begin by saying, ‘Peace to this house.’ If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay at the same house, eating and drinking whatever you are offered” (Luke 10:5-7, BSB).
“And they traverse their native land, and on each occasion that they go on a journey they carry nothing except arms.” ⁴⁴	“Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt” (Luke 9:3, NIV).

⁴⁰ Late 2nd century Christian Theologian, Hippolytus of Rome, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 9.14. From "The Early Church Fathers and Other Works" originally published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. in English in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1867. See also Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.20, “*This is demonstrated by that institution of theirs in which all things are held in common; so that a rich man enjoys no more of his own wealth than he who has nothing at all.*” See also Philo, *Every Good Man is Free*, 12.

⁴² Late 2nd century Christian Theologian, Hippolytus of Rome, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 9.14. From "The Early Church Fathers and Other Works" originally published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. in English in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1867.

⁴³ Late 2nd century Christian Theologian, Hippolytus of Rome, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 9.15. From "The Early Church Fathers and Other Works" originally published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. in English in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1867.

⁴⁴ Late 2nd century Christian Theologian, Hippolytus of Rome, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 9.15. From "The Early Church Fathers and Other Works" originally published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. in English in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1867.

<p>“And their robe and its shape are modest.” ⁴⁵</p>	<p>“Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets” (Luke 20:46, NIV)</p>
<p>“And they do not own two cloaks, or a double set of shoes; and when those that are in present use become antiquated, then they adopt others. And they neither buy nor sell anything at all; but whatever any one has he gives to him that has not, and that which one has not he receives.” ⁴⁶</p>	<p>“Whoever has two tunics should share with him who has none, and whoever has food should do the same” (Luke 3:11, BSB).</p>
<p>“ And when they have taken their seats in silence, they set down loaves in order... and each receives from these a sufficient portion. No one, however, tastes these before the priest utters a blessing, and prays over the food.” ⁴⁷</p>	<p>“And He instructed the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then He took the seven loaves, gave thanks and broke them, and gave them to His disciples” (Mark 8:6, BSB); “Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them” (Luke 24:30, NKJV).</p>
<p>“And especially they abstain from wrath and anger, and all such passions, inasmuch as they consider these to be treacherous to man.” ⁴⁸</p>	<p>“You have heard that it was said to the ancients, ‘Do not murder’ and ‘Anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment” (Matthew 5:21-22, BSB).</p>

⁴⁵ Late 2nd century Christian Theologian, Hippolytus of Rome, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 9.15. From "The Early Church Fathers and Other Works" originally published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. in English in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1867.

⁴⁶ Late 2nd century Christian Theologian, Hippolytus of Rome, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 9.15. From "The Early Church Fathers and Other Works" originally published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. in English in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1867.

⁴⁷ Late 2nd century Christian Theologian, Hippolytus of Rome, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 9.16. From "The Early Church Fathers and Other Works" originally published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. in English in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1867.

⁴⁸ Late 2nd century Christian Theologian, Hippolytus of Rome, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 9.17. From "The Early Church Fathers and Other Works" originally published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. in English in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1867.

<p>"And no one amongst them is in the habit of swearing; but whatever any one says, this is regarded more binding than an oath." ⁴⁹</p>	<p>"Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill your vows to the Lord.' But I tell you not to swear at all; But let your statement 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and 'No,' 'No.' Anything more than these comes from evil" (Matthew 5:33-34;37).</p>
<p>"But as regards judicial decisions, the Essenes are most accurate and impartial. And they deliver their judgments when they have assembled together, numbering at the very least one hundred; and the sentence delivered by them is irreversible." ⁵⁰</p>	<p>"The apostles and elders met to consider this question; When they finished, James spoke up. "Brothers," he said, "listen to me; It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God" (Acts 15:6;13;19, NIV).</p>

⁴⁹ Late 2nd century Christian Theologian, Hippolytus of Rome, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 9.17. From "The Early Church Fathers and Other Works" originally published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. in English in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1867.

⁵⁰ Late 2nd century Christian Theologian, Hippolytus of Rome, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 9.20. From "The Early Church Fathers and Other Works" originally published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. in English in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1867.