

## Why Baptism?

It's hard to believe that Passover is only 24 days away. It seems like yesterday we left the Feast of Tabernacles. We all know that Passover is a time for self-reflection and our covenant renewal. We have had many months to dig deeper into God's Word and grow closer in our personal relationship with Him. Hopefully, we have all grown in some way since last year and are continuing on to perfection.

**Ephesians 4:11-13-** “And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers For the perfecting of the saints, for *the* work of *the* ministry, for *the* edifying of the body of Christ; Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ;”

Our observance of the Passover ceremony is probably the most solemn of God's Holy Days as we are recommitting our lives to living it His way. It is not an exclusionary procedure, but we do have scriptural guidelines and instructions that are to be followed. This cannot be taken lightly.

**1 Corinthians 11:26-29-** “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you solemnly proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes. For this reason, if anyone shall eat this bread or shall drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, he shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself and let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup accordingly Because the one who eats and drinks unworthily is eating and drinking judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord.”

Our participation in the Passover requires us to repent and be baptized into the faith and Family of God. This commanded observance is part of God’s Plan of Salvation for mankind. We come to this place of reverence because of our sincere and heartfelt repentance of our sins, our faith and belief in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice in paying for our sins, our commitment to His Word and obeying all of His Commandments. It is a necessary process before we are worthy to “sign the contract” with the pledge of our very lives. It is a ritual symbolic of dying to our old self and being resurrected into the newness of Christ Jesus.

**John 3:3-7-** “Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly I say to you, unless anyone is born again (anew), he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man who is old be born? Can he enter his mother’s womb a

second time and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless anyone has been born of water and of Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which has been born of the flesh is flesh; and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'It is necessary for you to be born again.'"

This is a fork in the road so many Protestant religions use to avoid keeping God's Commandments. Accepting Jesus as their Savior and saying a "sinner's prayer," averts the necessary Commandment keeping and missing the First Resurrection.

Just to give Merriam-Webster their weekly mention, "baptize means to purify or cleanse spiritually especially by a purging. "Baptize," from the Greek *baptizo*, means "to immerse," "plunge into" or "put into." Two entirely different words are used in the Greek text to refer to pouring (*cheo*) or sprinkling (*rantizo*). The word "baptize" does not appear in the Old Testament. There were, however, "baptisms" that did occur indicating the spiritual significance of water submersion.

**1 Peter 3:20-21-** "*Which* disobeyed in a past time, when once the long-suffering of God was waiting in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few—that is, eight souls—were saved through water; *Of which a like*

**fulfillment is baptism**, and is now saving us—not *the* removal of *the* filth of *the* flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,”

**1 Corinthians 10:1-4**- “Now I do not wish you to be ignorant *of this*, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. **And all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.** And *they* all ate the same spiritual meat. And *they* all drank *of* the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed *them*. And that Rock was Christ.”

We first see baptism in the New Testament with John the Baptist baptizing with water unto repentance from sin.

**Matthew 3:10-12**- “But already the axe is striking at the roots of the trees; therefore, every tree that is not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into *the* fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but the One Who *is* coming after me is mightier than I, of Whom I am not fit to carry His sandals; He shall baptize you with *the* Holy Spirit, and with fire; Whose winnowing shovel *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather His wheat into the granary; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire.”

In Mark and Luke, we read that John the Baptist was fulfilling the words of the prophet Isaiah.

**Mark 1:3-5-** “*The* voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of *the* Lord, make straight His paths.’ ” John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching *the* baptism of repentance for *the* remission of sins. And all *those* of the country of Judea went out, and those of Jerusalem, and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

**Luke 3:2-4-** “In the time of the priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John, *the son* of Zacharias, in the wilderness. And he went into all the country around the Jordan, proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, saying, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight His paths.’

**Isaiah 40:3-5-** “A voice is calling out in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked places

shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

They all foretold of the Messiah who would come after him baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire.

**Luke 3:16-18-** “John answered all of them, saying, “I indeed baptize you with water; but He is coming Who is mightier than I, of Whom I am not fit to loose the thong of His sandals. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire; Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His granary; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.” And with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people.”

**John 1:25-27-** “And they asked him, saying to him, “Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” John answered them, saying, “I baptize with water, but there is One Who stands among you Whom you do not know. He it is Who comes after me, but Who has precedence over me; of Whom I am not worthy to loose the thong of His sandal.”

As Jesus was without sin, He still required John to baptize Him to fulfill “all righteousness.”

**Matthew 3:15-17-** “Then Jesus answered and said to him, “You must permit *it* at this time; for in this manner, it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him *to be baptized*. And after He was baptized, *Jesus came up immediately out of the water*; and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon Him. And lo, a voice from heaven said, “This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I have *great* delight.”

Christ’s baptism set the example for us to follow. He was fully submerged in the water. If He “*came up*,” immediately from the water, He must have been totally under it. If we think rationally about the symbolism of being dead and in the grave, we will not have our head, arms or legs sticking up. A sprinkle from a ladle or a handful on the forehead will not suffice. Christ is our perfect example to follow.

**1 Peter 2:21-** “For to this you were called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His footsteps.”

Too many toss the term “Christian” about without being obedient to its Namesake.

**1 John 2:4-6-** “The one who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. On the other hand, if anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked.”

Jesus knew what needed to be done to demonstrate the steps we must follow to be admitted into His Kingdom. We are commanded to be baptized.

**Matthew 28:19-20-** “Therefore, go and make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even until the completion of the age.” Amen.”

**Mark 16:15-16-** “And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but the one who does not believe shall be condemned.”

Again, many miss the instructions in these scriptures. This charge to His Disciples was not to hand out tracts or leaflets nor to sell Miracle Spring Water, He sent them out to the churches where the believers and seekers of truth were. It was not exclusionary to the Jews, Greeks, or even Romans, but to anyone who believed on Christ and the Gospel message. You cannot make a disciple from a non-believer.

In our case it is again, the symbolic death to our old self and arising to the newness of life in Jesus Christ. Our complete submersion under the water represents our burial and resurrection. Once baptized, we consider ourselves dead to our sins and old way of life. We become committed to keeping His Commandments and Holy Days as He instructs in His Word. It is not a multiple choice or any “pick and choose options.” It’s “all in” as we discussed last week.

**Romans 6:3-5-** “Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death (*A literal translation from the Greek, meaning one’s covenant death with Christ and His death through the operation of baptism by **full immersion in water.***); so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we

have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection.”

**Colossians 3:8-10-** “But now, you should also put off all *these* things: wrath, indignation, malice, blasphemy, *and* foul language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, *seeing that* you have put off the old man together with his deeds, And have put on the new man, who *is* being renewed in knowledge according to *the* image of Him Who created him;”

Baptism is a critical part of our spiritual journey towards salvation and the Kingdom of God. We cannot be included in the First Resurrection without true repentance, baptism, and keeping God’s Commandments, *all of them*.

**Hebrews 6:1-6-** “Therefore, advancing beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ, we should go on to perfection; not laying again *the* foundation of repentance from dead works, and *of* faith in God, *Of the* doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and *of the* resurrection of *the* dead, and of eternal judgment. And we will do this, if indeed God permits. For *it is* impossible for those *who were* once enlightened, and who personally obtained the heavenly gift, and became partakers of *the* Holy Spirit, And who have tasted *the* good Word of God,

and *the* powers of *the* world to come, If they have fallen away, to renew *them* again unto repentance; *seeing that* they are crucifying the Son of God for themselves and are publicly holding *Him* in contempt.”

When we are baptized and have hands laid upon us, we receive God’s Holy Spirit. If you think you feel His presence now surrounding you, wait until His Spirit is within you! The blindfold will really begin to be removed.

**Acts 2:37-38-** “Now after hearing this, they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

**Acts 8:15-17-** “Who, after coming down to Samaria, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit; For as yet it had not fallen upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”

**Acts 9:17-18-** “Then Ananias went away and came into the house; and after laying his hands on him, he said, “**Brother Saul**, the Lord has sent me, even Jesus, Who appeared to you on the road in which you came, so that you might receive sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And it was as if scales immediately fell from his eyes, and he instantly received sight; and he arose and was baptized.”

**Acts 10:46-48-** “For they heard them speak in other languages and magnify God. Then Peter responded by saying, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have also received the Holy Spirit as we did?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they besought him to remain for a number of days.”

**Acts 11:16-** “Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’”

**Acts 19:3-6-** “Then he said to them, “Unto what then were you baptized?” And they said, “Unto the baptism of John.” And Paul said, “John truly baptized with a baptism unto repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in Him Who was coming after him—that is, in Jesus, the Christ.” And after hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Now when Paul laid his hands on

them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with other languages and prophesied.”

When we are baptized, we are not joining a club or a denomination. We are being inducted into the Name of God, His Church, and His Family. With this role comes a great responsibility to adhere and obey His Word. When we receive His Holy Spirit at the laying on of hands, we truly become Christians and part of the body of Christ. We become God’s children and heirs to His Kingdom.

**Romans 8:14-17-** “For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. Now you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received the Spirit of sonship, whereby we call out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God. Now if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be glorified together with Him.”

**1 Corinthians 12:11-14-** “But the one and the same Spirit is operating in all these things, dividing separately to each one as *God* Himself desires. For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the one body, though

many, are one body; so also, *is* Christ. For indeed, by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free—and we were all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body *of Christ* is not one member, but many.”

**Galatians 3:25-29-** “But since faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor because you are all offspring of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many *of you* as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you *are* Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to *the* promise.”

There may come a time when (if you are not yet baptized) when you ask yourself if “am I ready?” This is a question only you can answer. Your walk with God is your walk and yours alone. It is your choice to make. If you have come to a place in your faith and beliefs and you love God first, you may be ready. You need not be a bible scholar or a deacon or an elder. Just a humble and contrite heart seeking to love, honor, obey and seek God with *all you are*. It isn’t for the fainthearted as we mention so often. You must realize that the commitment is for the remainder of your life. It is not to be taken lightly. You must be fully aware of the seriousness of

your decision. But when you have weighed the costs, I am confident God will reveal the time.

**Luke 9:62-** “But Jesus said to him, “No one who sets his hand to the plow, and looks back at the things behind, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

**Luke 14:28-30-** “For which one of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has sufficient for its completion; Lest perhaps, after he has laid its foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, Saying, ‘This man began to build, and was not able to finish’?”

Some may take years before coming to and accepting the truth. Others may not wait as long.

**Acts 8:34-38-** “And the eunuch answered and said to Philip, “I pray you, about whom does the prophet say this? About himself, or about another?” Then Philip opened his mouth and, beginning from this scripture, preached to him the gospel of Jesus. And as they were going down the road, they came upon a certain pool of water; and the eunuch said, “Look, there is water! What is preventing me from being baptized?” And Philip said, “**If you believe with all your heart, it is**

**permitted**.” Then he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” And he commanded the one driving the chariot to stop; and they both went down *into* the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and *he baptized him*.”

When we are baptized we are telling God we have been crucified with Christ and we no longer live but it is Christ Who lives in us.

**Galatians 2:20-** “I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live. *Indeed*, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me. For *the life* that I am now living in *the* flesh, I live by faith—that *very faith* of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

**Ephesians 4:4-7-** “*There is* one body and one Spirit, even as you were also called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all, Who *is* over all, and through all, and in you all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

**Colossians 2:12-13-** “Having been buried with Him in baptism, by which you have also been raised with *Him* through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead. For you, who were *once* dead in *your* sins and in the

uncircumcision of your flesh, He has *now* made alive with Him, having forgiven all your trespasses.”

Your decision must go far beyond mere belief. It is a conviction and commitment to being obedient to God and His Word for the rest of your life. Keeping His Sabbaths and Holy Days is life changing, but for the better! So many falter at this point on their journey due to pressures from family or worldly concerns. If this is the case, God is not first in your life. Christ fully understood the conflict we would face in choosing to follow Him.

**Luke 14:26-28-** “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple; For which one of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has sufficient for its completion;”

**Luke 14:33-** “In the same way also, each one of you who does not forsake all that he possesses cannot be My disciple.”

Forgetting all the man-made traditions we grew up on, putting away the things that are not in line with God's Word is why many never move forward. Nothing of this earth should stop us from moving forward toward salvation and First Resurrection blessings. Once we have repented and accepted God's truth, Christ's sacrifice, and *know* that we have found The Truth, *the only one holding us back is ourselves.*

You always have the option of waiting a thousand years and repeating the entrance exam all over. *The choice is yours to make.*

**Acts 22:14-16-** “And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has personally chosen you to know His will, and to see the Just One, and to hear the voice of His mouth; For you shall be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now *why do you delay?* Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’”