

INTRODUCTION¹

HOMILIES ON BAPTISM.

Oh, you joy bringing sacrament, our baptism, through which we have been saved from the powers of this present world and have been betrothed to Jesus Christ. What joy and peace you have brought as we have entered the greatest of all covenants, the eternal covenant, and have found refuge under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

To whom was this great mystery revealed in the ages that have past? Was it not foretold by one prophet after another, preserved for us today in the Holy Scriptures? Was this not the eternal plan of our creator, that we by one baptism would become one body, with Jesus himself as our head? That we would be washed by her waters and cleansed from the stink and filth of unrighteousness?

And of all substances which God has created, what is more necessary than water, by which we wash our bodies of impurities and diminishes any undesirable odors? And is it not this same water by which we clean our houses, our utensils and most everything we possess when it gets dirty? How fitting from the Most High that this same water brings to us the cleansing power of the blood which Jesus shed for us, that in our baptism we receive the forgiveness of our sins?

THE SPIRIT OF GOD HOVERED OVER THE WATERS

Even from the very beginning of creation can we not see God's predetermined council? The waters covered the earth and the spirit of God hovered over the waters in anticipation.

[In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Now the earth was unformed and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters. Gen 1,1-2 Jewish Publication Society](#)

Why was the water so important in God's plan of creation, in the birth of the earth? Does it not coincide with an even greater creation, the spiritual birth of his very own Sons and Daughters, who, rising out of the water of baptism, are born of the water and spirit? We see throughout God's craftsmanship in his creation countless foreshadows of the importance water in birth. Why was it water, and not blood, which engulfs an unborn child until the day of their birth? Not only are animals brought forth into this world, coming out of the water, but how many insects and reptiles also find their birth into this world through the water. Even that great nuisance of an insect, the mosquito, bears offspring through blood and water, and when they find no water, they cannot breed. Just as the wind, the blood and the water play all a decisive part in the birth of the mosquitoes, so it is that the Holy Spirit, the blood of Jesus and the water of baptism are all necessary for children to be born of God.

And so, as similar to the birth of a newborn child, engulfed in the water of his mother's womb, even so was the birth of all life brought forth as the Spirit of the Creator hovered over the earth engulfed in water.

[And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. Gen 1,6-8a KJV](#)

With water above and water below, God's new creation was now to come forth out of the water, in all of its variety and fullness.

[Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. Gen 1,9-10 KJV](#)

As the waters subsided the earth appeared. And God brought forth out of the earth his most beautiful creations, plants of all sorts, various fruit bearing trees and the fullness of vegetation. And in the waters on the fifth day God brought forth swarms of living creatures. ⁱⁱ

[Then God said, "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens." God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. Gen 1,20-21 NAS](#)

In the firmament he brought forth all kinds of flying birds. They were all created and multiplied upon the earth. And out of the earth God brought forth all the living creatures and animals. Were not the birds themselves, born on the earth, but destined for the heavens, a small reflection of a very special plan he had for mankind? And is not even the butterfly, born as one of the slowest and incapable creeping creatures, destined to beauty and flight in the Heaven. And what about

the great sea monsters, destined for a life in the darkest depths of the earth? Do they not both show the varieties of people, some attaining their call to glory; others yielding to the powers of darkness and becoming monsters, destined for eternal damnation?

In the likeness of God, in his very own image, similar to the appearance of angels, God created man out of the earth. He was created to have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky and over all the animals. He was created to rule, filled by the glory of God, and be the master of the earth as he executed God's intentions upon the earth in obedience to his creator.

Just six days earlier the earth had been covered with water. Now it was filled with myriads of new creatures and life forms showing in this newly created paradise the beauty that only the hands of God could create. Is not the earth, as we see it today, six thousand years later, only the remaining ruins of his great workmanship, having not only been destroyed once by the flood, but also by the natural aging process?

All this was the workmanship of the Holy Spirit hovering over the water, bringing forth by the council of God every life form and every creature upon the face of the earth.

Has the Spirit of God ceased in his work of creation? Did he retire after the ending of these six days? No! Not at all! Since this day he has been working and having his delight in the Sons of Man. His eternal craftsmanship can be seen in the lives of those created to share eternity with the Almighty

Did God's work cease as Adam and Eve sinned and turned away from their creator? Did the serpent win in the Garden of Eden? Is not the opposite true, that as sin and death came into the world, the importance of his eternal heavenly work and the destiny of all who would one day die became of primary importance? . He thereby renews those who have fallen, making them into a new creation, a new type, where the sin of the fall is not only forgiven, but corruption is overcome by incorruption.ⁱⁱⁱ

Yet what patience has been shown by the Holy Spirit towards the disobedience of Man! How great his compassion, that he has not long given up as wickedness filled his beautifully created earth! How disappointing it must have been for the Creator, being forced to observe the thoughts and actions of his most beloved creation, who had now become his enemy!

[Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Gen 6,5 NAS](#)

Could it be that even the Spirit of God moving over the face of the earth in the days of creation was foreshadowing an even greater work which the Spirit would do through the waters of baptism, bringing those who would be obedient to the beckoning of the Spirit out of the corruption of the world and birthing them into the kingdom of God as the eternal Sons and Daughters of God?^{iv}

Since the fall of man, the Spirit of God is moving in the hearts of man, calling them to repentance. His voice can be heard in every country in every language; Turn from your wicked ways! Call upon Jesus, that his blood might cleanse you of your stench of death. This is the voice of the Spirit of truth, who reveals to us the sentence of death upon every man who has sinned.

Yet who will listen to the truth and follow his leading into the water, that they might be cleansed of their sin and have eternal life? And what is so special with the water of baptism, that we find

in this bath of rebirth such overwhelming promises? And like the butterflies leaving behind their identity as a caterpillar, which died as it became a cocoon, we leave the corruption of our earthly birth behind us and enter our eternal destiny as Sons of God.

Being heavily pregnant by the living words of the Spirit, the Sons of the Almighty God and eternal Heirs with Jesus, the Messiah, are lead to the water of baptism! Is it not in us being dipped three times underneath this water that we are united with him in his death? And are we not united with him in his victory over death as we come out of the water? The sin from the fall being cleansed by the water, we rise in his victory over sin and are regenerated, born as Sons of God, eternal, and in the likeness of Jesus.

ONE BODY

What did the Spirit of God have in mind as the earth was created? Why was he hovering over the waters? Is he not preparing for a betrothal?

So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The LORD God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, the man said: "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called 'woman,' for out of 'her man' this one has been taken." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body. Gen 2,21-24

No sooner were the heavens and the earth created, and there is a joining of Adam and his newly formed wife Eve. It is not good for man to be alone. Just as the creator is love, so he created a wife for the man, that he would love and cherish her. Certainly Adam rejoiced, living in the most beautiful paradise of all times, freshly created by the hands of the Almighty God. But there was no creation that brought him so much fulfillment and joy as his very own wife, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.

And even from the very beginning we see the ordinance of God, that a man would be united to his wife, and the two of them would become one body.

What great unity! What great love! This is the covenant between a man and woman. Today we call this special God ordained covenant marriage, the foundation of every people and every culture on the face of the earth. Through marriage children are born into the world. Through marriage a protective shield surrounds the holy offspring and they can grow up in an atmosphere of love, the love of a husband for his wife, the love of a wife for her husband, the love of the father for his sons and daughters, the love of a mother for her babies. Through this unique covenant the earth is filled with the love of God.

And yet even this love was foretelling of a yet greater love to come, a yet higher covenant than the bond of love which joins a man to his wife. What can be stronger and greater than a covenant that only death itself could break? What covenant can be greater than that, whereby God joins a man to his wife and they become one body? It is not the eternal covenant, where an eternal oath is made? Is it not an everlasting marriage, where sinners become saints and become one body with Jesus, the bridegroom? Is not this the greater covenant, where death does not break it asunder, but rather brings its fulfillment? And in this covenant, the betrothal of the heavenly bride, her oaths and promises of faithfulness are made in the waters of baptism!^v

What promise does the bride make, that she is then taken and dipped three times underneath the water? And why is this promise so important, that each of these three dippings is sealed with the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit being invoked upon her?

Is it not in this oath that she renounces the invisible world rulers of this present darkness, the evil spirits in the heavens? And is it not here that she swears allegiance to the eternal King, who in great love will now become her good shepherd, her faithful provider, her daily comforter and from this day on her Lord and eternal husband? And so, with the boldness of her confession her repentance is complete. This is our betrothal to Jesus. And in this covenant we, as his bride, are made one body with the Messiah¹, the Christ.

¹ Mt 16,16 Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

We are united with Jesus and with the rest of the saints as we are baptized by water into one body. In this body Jesus is the head and we are all members. This is the eternal covenant, which will culminate with the marriage supper of the Lamb, where the bride will become his wife for eternity, and the majestic Angels our guests.

SAVED THROUGH WATER

Just as the Spirit of God hovered over the waters by the creation, this same water was later the instrument by which the Spirit of God removed corruption from off the face of the earth. The inhabitants of the earth had greatly multiplied. For nineteen hundred years sons and daughters had been born, houses built, villages established and cities founded. As mankind abounded, wickedness filled the earth.

And so it was at the time of Noah.

Adam had been created to live forever, the admiration of all the angels. Yet because of his disobedience to the commandment of God, he was driven from the face of God and died when he was nine hundred and thirty years old. His sons and daughters also showed the greatness of their creator, yet because of sin they drifted into selfishness and became very corrupt.

When the LORD saw how great was man's wickedness on earth, and how no desire that his heart conceived was ever anything but evil, he regretted that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was grieved. So the LORD said: "I will wipe out from the earth the men whom I have created and not only the men, but also the beasts and the creeping things and the birds of the air, for I am sorry that I made them." Gen 6, 5-7

God regretted that he had made man. That was such a glorious day, as God blew his very life into Adam and created him in his own image, rejoicing in a most unspeakable way. Yet as sexual sin contagiously broke forth upon all of the inhabitants of the earth, corruption and wickedness filled the earth as the waters cover the sea. Out of the depths of Hell the most deadly poison had been compounded and spread throughout the cities and villages, being blown as a blazing fire by the wind of burning, uncontrollable lustful desires. The beauty formed by the hands of the almighty God burned to ashes through fire fed by deeds of unspeakable shame.

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they *were* beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." Gen 6,1-3 NKJV

Being led by their sexual desires, men took for themselves wives as they chose. Instead of honoring their creator, they burned in their lusts and left the way of obedience to the voice of God.

Above in heaven a great destruction had already happened. God's holy angels, also called Sons of God², had also been sorely tempted with corruption. Not all of them stood firm in their holiness, but were found disobedient as they yielded to selfish ambitions and other temptations.

The corrupted sons of God, forsaking their holiness to the Almighty, saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful. These angelic beings, already making war with their creator, became acutely involved with pouring out their corruption onto mankind. Men, made in the image of God, yielded themselves to the control of these detestable fallen creatures and became vessels of dishonor. Instead of the holy joining of a man and a woman in marriage to one flesh, and thereby forming a family where children could be raised and mankind could fulfill the command of God

² Job 1,6 One day, when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, Satan also came among them.

to multiply and fill the earth, the godly desire became perverted and brought with it a thorough corruption. A great door had been opened for the forces of darkness by instilling in corrupted men their lustful desire for the daughters of men. And in the daughters of men their grew a hunger for that very corruption.

They lived for their lusts and caused such a very great disruption in God's creation, that even their children marked this breach³. No longer were children born to families having the wish to obey God and multiply upon the earth. They were born through this unfathomable wickedness of men and women giving themselves to the will and control of the fallen sons of God.

Because of this great evil, the LORD intervened and shortened their lifespan. He, who made man originally to live forever, now shortened his days to one hundred and twenty years. Yet even this could not thwart the inevitable destruction.

As in the beginning, the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters, preparing to cleanse the earth of her wickedness. The waters were again to cover the face of the earth. This time, however, there would be nothing new created, but rather every living creature, man as well as beast, would be destroyed! Instead of filling the earth with the glory of God, sinful man had brought throughout the earth wickedness and violence.

Why did not God start over again? In the beginning the waters receding and a glorious new creation appeared. This time the waters would recede and only a destroyed earth covered with mud would appear.

[But Noah found favor with the LORD.](#)

Of all the millions of people on the earth, only Noah was spared! Man's wickedness was visible before the most holy. The whole human race thought only evil all day long and God regretted that he even made man. And God, who sees the thoughts of the heart, was forced to see unfathomable wickedness spreading like a wildfire throughout the earth and corrupting everyone and everything,

But Noah and his household stood against this wickedness. They did not yield themselves to the wishes of the fallen sons of God.

[When God saw how corrupt the earth had become, since all mortals led depraved lives on earth, he said to Noah: "I have decided to put an end to all mortals on earth; the earth is full of lawlessness because of them. So I will destroy them and all life on earth. Gen 6, 12-13](#)

God's beautiful creation had become corrupt through the wickedness of man. Just as fruit decays when not preserved, so the rancid stink of decaying mankind rose into the nostrils of the Almighty God. Corrupted by their fleshly lusts, the inhabitants of the earth were the living dead. And their rancid smell before the LORD and his holy angels was worse than the rotting of a million carcasses.

The whole human race had gone far past the place of no return, and was not in the least interested in preserving themselves through self control. God was grieved that his most beautiful creation had become the breeding place of every type of wickedness and evil. He sorely regretted that he had even made man.

³ Gen 6,4 There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore *children* to them. Those *were* the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.

But Noah found favor with the LORD.

Noah was over 500 years old. He had three sons, and each of his sons, different than the rest of the inhabitants of the earth, had only one wife. Planning for the destruction of all mortals, God commanded Noah to build a huge ark, 135 meters long and 23 meters high, divided into three levels. Not only had God decided to destroy man, but all life on the earth. This ark was the sign of the new covenant, which the LORD made with Noah and his family.

I, on my part, am about to bring the flood (waters) on the earth, to destroy everywhere all creatures in which there is the breath of life; everything on earth shall perish. But with you I will establish my covenant; you and your sons, your wife and your sons' wives, shall go into the ark. Gen 6,17-18

In a paradise without sin God created the first covenant, a covenant where a man and woman would be joined by the sovereign hand of God to being one body. And now, at a time when sin is abounding throughout the earth, a new covenant is being established by God with Noah. This is a covenant where God makes promises to Noah and his descendants.

"See, I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you: all the birds, and the various tame and wild animals that were with you and came out of the ark. I will establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all bodily creatures be destroyed by the waters of a flood; there shall not be another flood to devastate the earth." Gen 9, 9-12

No matter how wicked men and woman may become in the future, God made a covenant with Noah and his descendants to never destroy them from off the face of the earth. And God established this covenant for as long as the earth would last.

"Never again will I doom the earth because of man, since the desires of man's heart are evil from the start; nor will I ever again strike down all living beings, as I have done. As long as the earth lasts, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: "Be fertile and multiply and fill the earth. Gen 8,21-9,1

All flesh belonged to this new covenant. And they, just as with Adam and Eve, were blessed and were told, **be fertile and multiply and fill the earth**. The earth was now to be filled with people belonging to this covenant which God had made. And for all ages this covenant would remain between God and mankind. As a sign of this everlasting covenant God drew into the clouds a beautiful bow of colors.

God added: "This is the sign that I am giving for all ages to come, of the covenant between me and you and every living creature with you: I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the covenant I have made between me and you and all living beings, so that the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all mortal beings. As the bow appears in the clouds, I will see it and recall the everlasting covenant that I have established between God and all living beings--all mortal creatures that are on earth." God told Noah: "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all mortal creatures that are on earth." Gen 9,12-17

When God sees the rainbow, he thinks of this very special covenant he made with Noah. Even though the corruption fills the earth today just as in the times of Noah, God remains faithful to the inhabitants of the earth and keeps this promise. And when we see this beautiful bow in the

clouds, we can be assured of the grace that God shows towards us, his everlasting love and heartfelt compassion, wishing above all things that we would not be eternally condemned, but rather escape the corruption that is in the world through lust⁴.

I am certain, after spending decades of hard work and building with his three sons a ship over 135 meters long, that this was not done in secret. There is no doubt that this great accomplishment of Noah was for the people of former times an amusement. One of the most asked questions of the others in their generation must have been, 'Why are you building such a big ship so far from the waters of the sea?' I would expect news of this incredible feat was known throughout the earth. And I am certain that Noah didn't lie, but told them that because of their wickedness God was going to bring a great flood and destroy them all from off the face of the earth. They may have asked also 'Why are you making it so large?'. He would have answered, 'So that the animals could also fit. Only those on the ark, of both man and animals, will survive this flood.' His obedience to build this ark brought God's message of repentance throughout the ancient world.

and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 2.Pet 2,5

As the rain did come, and the waters began to rise, it was too late for anyone to enter the ark. The Lord himself shut them in and thereby condemned to certain death everyone who had remained ungodly and did not heed the warning of Noah to repent.

Those that entered were male and female, and of all species they came, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in. Gen 7,16

Indescribable panic filled the earth as the people tried to escape the waters of the flood. Some fled to the mountains, others tried to get on floating wood or boats. Mothers fought in vain to keep their loved children from the rising flood. As the rain fell and the floods multiplied, men and women fought for their last breath.

Just a week earlier they had lived in certainty and in contempt against their creator.

In (those) days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. Mt 24,38

Marrying and giving in marriage had become their favorite pastime, *and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.*

All of their plans came suddenly to an end. And during this panic the words of Noah came to their remembrance. They had not believed his words and now it was too late. There was nowhere they could escape to.

Maybe some ran to the ark, hoping that maybe they might escape the waters of the flood. But the door was securely closed, for the LORD himself had shut them in. Maybe Noah and his sons could hear pounding on the ship, or voices pleading for mercy. Noah and his sons certainly thought of all the people they had known, how they had talked with them, maybe even pleading with them that they would turn from their evil ways. But such conversations could only bring scorn from

⁴ 2.Pet 1,4 having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

those not in the least interested. Their words would only be the wood feeding the fire for their mockery.

[They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage up to the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Lk 17,27](#)

There were certainly some who recognized the evils of their generation. As today, there were some who avoided the depths of wickedness so greatly esteemed by others. And very likely, there were some who did not completely doubt what Noah spoke. Because man had been just recently created in the image of God, virtually everyone at this time believed in God. Adam had lived 930 years, and certainly the people of his time knew that God was the creator of all things. Lamech, the father of Noah, was born as Adam was 870 years old. And Noah was 600 years old as he entered the ark.

Yet nobody was saved from the flood just because they disagreed with the extreme wickedness of their generation. And nobody was saved who believed the message of Noah, unless they entered the ark. The only ones who really believed Noah were his three sons and his three daughter-in-laws, otherwise they would have pleaded to the Noah family that they might partake in their preparation and thereby find refuge when the flood would come.

His sons must have also lived lives similar to that of their father, considering the amount of wickedness on the earth. They had been very selective as to who they married, for their wives were found on the Day of Judgment safe in the ark. And although the sons of Noah were 100 years old as they entered the ark, not one of them had borne a single child. They and their wives had given themselves to fulfilling the plan of God in building the ark and knew that having children at this time would only have been a hindrance to accomplishing God's will. Their children were to be borne after the flood in the new world.

[By faith Noah, warned about what was not yet seen, with reverence built an ark for the salvation of his household. Through this he condemned the world and inherited the righteousness that comes through faith. Hebr 11,7](#)

Decades of the life of Noah and his sons were dedicated to building this ark. All of their toil was based on the belief of something they did not see, something which was impossible. How could water multiply and completely cover every mountain upon the earth? Every nail they pounded, every piece of wood they cut, showed their certainty that God would do according to the word he had spoken. And every day of their labor made even more certain the condemnation of the world.

Once they completed their work, God could bring upon the earth the destruction according to his eternal council. But until the family of Noah had finished their work and entered into the ark, he had to wait patiently. The disobedient multiplied upon the earth like weeds not being hindered in their growth, and God himself was as a heartbroken Gardner seeing the weeds multiplying and destroying his most beautiful garden.

[who had once been disobedient while God patiently waited in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water. 1.Petr 3,20](#)

That same water which destroyed the wicked carried the ark and those who were to become the founders of a new world. Those same clouds and that same rain, which executed the judgment of God against those who yielded to the will of sin, bore in themselves the beautiful bow of colors as a

sign of the faithfulness of God to those who would heed his beckoning voice and let themselves be saved from the corruption which filled the earth.

[This prefigured baptism, which saves you now. 1.Petr 3,21](#)

Could it be that the eternal covenant of baptism in water is of such great importance to him that dwells in Heaven, that even the flood was a prefigure of this, foretelling of its significance?

Wickedness covered the earth and God's judgment was pending.

As Noah built the ark for the salvation of mankind, God has also built an ark, the church, which was completed and inaugurated fifty days after the death of Jesus. As God judged all who did not enter this ark with death, so will God judge all who do not enter through baptism into his eternal church with eternal death.

As there was only one door into the ark, so there is only one door into the church, baptism. As only those heeding God's voice and believing his reproving words entered into the ark of Noah, so only those believing the gospel and who cease from their wickedness are baptised into the church.

As Noah and his sons entered into the new covenant of grace, confirmed in the sky above by the rainbow in the clouds, so those who are baptized enter the new covenant of grace, where their sins and iniquities are forgiven and no longer remembered.

As the ark of Noah saved himself and his family, so does baptism now save us. Noah and his family were saved from death and the judgment of God against sin by the ark. We are saved by baptism, where we receive the pardon for our sins through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In this same baptism we rise with Christ into a new life and are seated with him in heaven, where we will rule with him forever.

THE CIRCUMCISION

Of all the families on the earth, God chose Abraham to be the Father of a special people, a people belonging to God himself. This nation would enter a covenant with God. Every man child belonging to this new nation would have the sign of this covenant on the foreskin of his flesh.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said: "I am God the Almighty. Walk in my presence and be blameless. Between you and me I will establish my covenant, and I will multiply you exceedingly." Gen 17,1

I will maintain my covenant with you and your descendants after you throughout the ages as an everlasting pact, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. Gen 17,7

Abraham lived so, that God was very pleased with him. His trust in the LORD marked him as a friend of God. And with Abraham God established the covenant of circumcision.

God also said to Abraham: "On your part, you and your descendants after you must keep my covenant throughout the ages. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you that you must keep: every male among you shall be circumcised. Circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the mark of the covenant between you and me. Gen 17,9-11

Similar to the pain of cutting off a finger, God required from Abraham that every male would undergo circumcision. And on this very day not only was Abraham circumcised, but every male of his household, both slave and free. This sign on the foreskin of every male was so important to God that he told Abraham, all who are not circumcised shall be cut off from my people.

Thus my covenant shall be in your flesh as an everlasting pact. If a male is uncircumcised, that is, if the flesh of his foreskin has not been cut away, such a one shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant." Gen 17, 14

Could it be that even this covenant was foretelling of a greater covenant, the circumcision of Christ, where our old self is buried with Christ in baptism? And is it not also true in the eternal covenant, that all are baptized by one spirit into one body? Just as those who would choose to not be circumcised were not seen as members of the nation of Israel, but cut off from his people, so it is with baptism in water, that the Lord knows who are his and who belongs to his church by obedience to this covenant. And such a one who wishes to belong to God's people, but who refuses to be baptized, shall be cut off.

In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not administered by hand, by stripping off the carnal body, with the circumcision of Christ. You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. Col 2,12-13

Was it not because of the great importance of this covenant that the Lord intended to kill Moses? Did not his disobedience almost cost him his life?

On the journey, at a place where they spent the night, the Lord came upon Moses and would have killed him. But Zipporah took a piece of flint and cut off her son's foreskin and, touching his person, she said, "You are a spouse of blood to me." Then God let Moses go. At that time she said, "A spouse of blood," in regard to the circumcision. Ex 4,24-26

Yet even his wife Zipporah, who was not an Israelite, knew exactly why the Lord was going to kill Moses. I am certain that she must have talked often with Moses about having their two sons circumcised. Still, for whatever reason, Moses had not circumcised them and had broken the covenant which God made with Abraham. And because of this, the Lord was about to cut Moses off because of his disobedience. Only the wisdom of his wife, and her readiness to immediately do that which God had been requiring, saved him from certain death. And having circumcised her sons, the Lord spared Moses.

How many have been unfaithful concerning the circumcision of Christ in baptism? Was it not an act of mercy that God judged Moses on this earth rather than waiting to when it would be too late, on the Day of Judgment? Why is it that God is so quiet concerning those who are disobedient to the covenant of baptism? Would it not be so much better for such as have not thought it necessary to obey Christ's words in baptism, that they would be harshly judged on this earth, where they still have a chance to enter the bath of regeneration? For on the Day of Judgment nobody will be baptized. On that day, however, the baptisms which happened on this earth, and the faithfulness to the oath spoken in baptism, will play the decisive role.

In circumcision, the foreskin of the member of the body instrumental for sex is removed. This same member had brought forth God's judgment against the wickedness in the time of Noah. This same member had brought forth God's judgment against the wickedness by which Sodom and Gomorrah had been destroyed just a few years earlier. And now, in this very special covenant, the foreskin of this member was to be cut off as the sign of the covenant between God and his people, later called Israel.

Could the council of God have chosen a more suiting member of our body by which we could be marked as belonging to him? How could God more clearly foretell of the great operation of God in the waters of baptism, where, instead of a piece of flesh, our carnal body, our old man is cut off and buried with Christ in his death? And so, through the sign of the new covenant, God has brought forth out of the world a people to himself. This is that same people whom God promised to Abraham even before the covenant of circumcision, at the time when God called Abraham into the land of Canaan.

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." Gen 12,1-3

Not only did God promise Abraham, that he would become a great nation, which today is Israel, who even today keep the covenant of circumcision entrusted to them. He also promised Abraham, that in him all of the families of the earth would be blessed. God promised Abraham two great people, one of which is a nation as every other nation. The other, however, is a nation amongst all the families of the earth. And as he made the covenant of circumcision with the descendants of Abraham, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the messiah, the Jews who entered the new covenant went into all the earth, baptizing those who would believe the gospel and repent. Through this new covenant, made through baptism in water, where the hearts themselves are circumcised and not alone the flesh, we are born again as new creatures. This prophecy to Abraham has been fulfilled as the gospel is preached in every nation under heaven.

Does not God reveal the extra-ordinary importance of baptism, where even circumcision was a fleshly prefigure of it? Who would have ever imagined that the kingdom of God was to come to this earth through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus, the Messiah, and that those who believed their message would enter the heavenly gates through baptism in water? How great the council of God, that the eternal covenant is left to the decision and oath of each individual, not able to be transferred to offspring, thereby assuring that each individual branch is firmly abiding in Christ. And how indescribable the wisdom of God, that the eternal covenant be based on an oath, and those who do not keep this oath would be removed from the church, that it remain for all generations the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit; the house of the most Holy God!

THE PASSOVER

Again pending Judgment was hanging over the inhabitants of the earth, this time it was Egypt. They had sorely mistreated his people Israel, making them all into slaves and throwing all of the male children into the Nile. Four hundred and thirty years long Israel had lived in Egypt. And the longer they remained, the worse they were handled. The LORD from heaven had compassion on them and sent Moses to Pharaoh, to deliver them from the slavery of Egypt. With the foreknowledge of the crucifixion of the Messiah, the LORD commanded the people of Israel to take a lamb on the 10th day of Nissan. This lamb was to be preserved for being sacrificed on the 14th day of Nissan, shortly before sunset, the exact day of the year and the time of day that Jesus, the lamb of God, would be sacrificed. The Passover foretold the atonement, which was fulfilled on the Passover almost 1450 years later.

For on this same night I will go through Egypt, striking down every first-born of the land, both man and beast, and executing judgment on all the gods of Egypt-I, the LORD! But the blood will mark the houses where you are. Seeing the blood, I will pass over you; thus, when I strike the land of Egypt, no destructive blow will come upon you. Ex 12,12-13

The people of Israel had been commanded to take of the blood from the Passover lamb and, using a hyssop branch, strike it on the lintel and the two doorposts of their homes. Using the branch, the blood came not only on the lintel and the two doorposts, but also, inevitably, in this process blood would have also been sprinkled upon the base of the door, forming the top, bottom, left and right side of a blood cross.

Then take a bunch of hyssop, and dipping it in the blood that is in the basin, sprinkle the lintel and the two doorposts with this blood. But none of you shall go outdoors until morning. For the LORD will go by, striking down the Egyptians. Seeing the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over that door and not let the destroyer come into your houses to strike you down. Ex 12,22-23

As the destroyer came over the land of Egypt, he was charged by the LORD to kill the firstborn in the houses where the doorposts were not marked by the blood of the lamb, those finding refuge under the blood would be spared.

And after the destroyer, the LORD himself came, in the form of a cloud during the day and a fire in the night. Visible to the people of Israel, he appeared after the Passover Lamb had been slaughtered and led them until they had entered their inheritance forty years later.

On this evening, after sunset, they were to partake in the eating of the lamb. On the 15th of Nissan the whole house of Israel partook of the Passover for the very first time. And on this very day, they were freed from hundreds of years of slavery.

Concerning the ordinance of the Passover, the Lord spoke to Moses that they should eat it with unleavened bread. And on this night they were to remove any leavened bread from their homes. For the next seven days they were to eat only unleavened bread.

How clearly did the LORD show his wish, that those who would be redeemed from the slavery of sin, the slavery of the world's lusts, should live pure lives and not let the leaven of unrighteousness again into their lives! And how perfect his council, that through the sacrifice of Jesus, the Passover Lamb, our sins should be atoned for and we would be freed from the slavery of sin!

Through the Passover Lamb God ordained that we, the inheritors of eternal life, should be redeemed by this very blood from the cruelty of Satan's rule over us.

Yet it was very important to the LORD that not everyone was to partake of the body of the lamb. The Passover is preserved to be partaken only by those who have entered his covenant.

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "These are the regulations for the Passover. No foreigner may partake of it. However, any slave who has been bought for money may partake of it, provided you have first circumcised him. Ex 12,43-44

No foreigner may partake of the Passover! No foreigner, no slave, no visitor, nobody, unless they are first circumcised. The Passover is only for those who have entered his covenant and thereby belong to his people. The others are forbidden from taking it. The LORD is not rejecting these people! Instead, he requires that they enter a lifelong covenant with him if they wish to partake of the Lamb of the Passover.

Is it not the LORD's express wish that not only the descendants of Abraham would partake of this covenant, but even the foreigner, the slave and the visitor? And for this reason he offers the Passover to all who will enter the covenant by being circumcised.

The whole community of Israel must keep this feast. If any aliens living among you wish to celebrate the Passover of the LORD, all the males among them must first be circumcised, and then they may join in its observance just like the natives. But no man who is uncircumcised may partake of it. The law shall be the same for the resident alien as for the native. Ex 12,47-49

The people of the covenant were commanded to keep the Passover, yet all others were forbidden to partake of it. If, however, someone wished to partake of it, then they must first be circumcised.

How clearly do we see in the Passover the reflection of the Lord's Supper! It is of no coincidence that it was at the Passover meal that the Lord gave the bread and wine to his disciples for the very first time. And it was of no coincidence that he took of the unleavened bread of the Passover, and gave it to them with the words, "Take and eat, this is my body."⁵ That unleavened bread, which had foretold for almost 1450 years his body, was now to find its place also in the new, eternal covenant. Concerning the bread given to his disciples, Jesus did not say, 'this foretells my body which will be broken for you', as the unleavened bread did, but instead, he said of the bread which he had blessed, 'this is my body'. The meat of the lamb also foretold of the body of Jesus sacrificed for us, but the bread which Jesus had blessed and of which he spoke to his disciples, 'this is my body' has provided to those who have entered the eternal covenant through baptism this partaking of his very body, of his very flesh.

Where was the blood in the Passover? Was it not stricken by the hyssop onto the two doorposts and lintel of the door? Is not the Passover Lamb eaten in a house marked by the blood? And whose blood did this foretell, that would save them from the destroyer as God's Judgment came? Was it not the blood of Jesus, by which we are redeemed from sin, from eternal judgment as God condemns the deeds of unrighteousness in the world? Was not Jesus the true Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world? And on this evening, gathered together in close communion with his apostles, he eats his last supper. Jesus then takes the final cup of wine belonging to the Passover

⁵ Mt 26,26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "Take and eat; this is my body."

after the meal was complete. Speaking a thank Psalm over this cup⁶, he says to his disciples, 'Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.' In the blood on the lintel and the doorposts the destroyer saw in the blood of a lamb the blood of Jesus. And even this was enough to save those who found refuge under its protective ark. How much more will the blood of Jesus, which we partake of in the cup of the covenant, protect us from the pending judgment of God against the inhabitants of the earth? And if the Passover lambs were slaughtered year for year as an everlasting ordinance for the circumcised, how much more is the blood of Jesus, shed once for all times, an assurance of salvation for those who have been baptized into the eternal covenant!

And so, for those who enter the eternal covenant through baptism, we are invited to have the same communion as Jesus had with his disciples in his last supper. By the ordinance of Jesus himself, with his very own words, we are to take this often in remembrance of his death.

Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you. Lk 22,19-20

Was not the Passover an exclusive ordinance? Did not this ordinance require of the partakers, that they be circumcised? How much more the partaking of the very body and blood of Jesus! And so in this ordinance only those who have been baptized into his body are to partake of this most holy bread from heaven. And only those who have the circumcision of Christ, being buried with him in baptism, are to drink of his blood.

If we do not discern this as what it is, his very body and blood, and allow for those to partake of it that have not yet entered the eternal covenant, will not this bring the exact opposite of which God intended? Will it not bring death rather than life, judgment rather than blessing?⁷

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. 1.Cor 10,16-17

What is there in all the earth that is more holy than the blood of Jesus? How indescribable the mercy of God, that we, who were once dead in our trespasses and sins, have attained through baptism access to the cup of blessing, his blood! Should not the utmost care be taken, the highest form of reverence shown, that we follow the instructions of Jesus, not giving that which is holy to dogs, or throwing our pearls before swine?

Do you not think that a much worse punishment is due the one who has contempt for the Son of God, considers unclean the covenant-blood by which he was consecrated, and insults the spirit of grace? Hebr 10,29

Let us then judged ourselves, whether we are worthy to partake of his blood in the cup of blessing.

Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. 1.Cor 11,27

⁶ Ps 116,12-13 How can I repay the LORD for all the good done for me? I will raise the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.

⁷ 1.Cor 11,27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord.

How do we make ourselves unworthy, us, who have been baptized for the forgiveness of our sins? Does not the Lord require from us, that we forgive every person? And if we have not forgiven from our hearts, that he will not forgive us?⁸ We, therefore, are not invited to take of his blood in the cup of blessing if there is anyone whom we have not forgiven. For if we do not forgive others, neither will our heavenly Father forgive us.

If someone who belongs to Christ, a diadem in his crown, falls again prey to demons, is it not right that the Church refuse him access to Christ's blood, unless he first repents?

[You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and also the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons. 1.Cor 10,21](#)

Let us, therefore, examine ourselves, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For just as we repented from our sins before we entered the waters of baptism, and were thereby sanctified by his blood, how much more should we approach the cup of blessing with the same respect? And so, coming with true repentance in our hearts and a true confession of our sins, we drink of Christ's blood.

And just as the blood of Jesus cleansed us at our baptism, so that our sins were washed and made white as snow, so the Father has ordained that through the taking of his blood we again may be fully restored in the fellowship with him, his Son and his church. And so, in our pilgrimage through a world filled with lusts and every evil thing, we might remain pure. Let us judge ourselves truthfully, with the intent of turning from anything which does not please the Lord. And in so doing, we might partake of that same joy we experienced as we were baptized; that the Lord is pleased with us and the blood of Jesus has cleansed us from all sin. And with faith in his blood, let us live our days as pilgrims on this earth with a pure conscience.

There are some who have made the oath of allegiance to Christ in baptism, and yet have been unfaithful to this most holy promise. If anyone, who calls himself a brother, has fallen into fornication, or adultery, or homosexuality or robbery or witchcraft or hatred, let him not partake with you of this most holy blood. But if he repents, forgive him.

[Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 1.Cor 5,7-8](#)

Let us be quick to forgive, endeavoring to preserve those who are struggling in their fight against sin. And with a holy gentleness let us be ever diligent in restoring any who may have strayed from the straight and narrow path.⁹ Instead of judgment, let us admonish one another often, lest the deceitfulness of sin may overtake some and harden their hearts.

⁸ If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions. Mt 6,14-15

⁹ My brothers, if anyone among you should stray from the truth and someone bring him back, he should know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. Jam 5,19-20

THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA

And where did the LORD, the cloud, lead those he redeemed from the slavery of Egypt? Was it not directly to the waters of the Red Sea? And not knowing where they were going, yet following the cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, they found themselves on the shores of the Red Sea.

[The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. Ex 13,21](#)

And so the Lord had the Israelites camp near Migdol, on the sea. Though Pharaoh and the Israelites had let them leave Goshen on Passover, yet his power over them was not yet broken. Gathering his whole army¹⁰, he pursued them and found them before the waters of the Red Sea. The cloud pillar moved from before them and went behind them, separating the camp of the Israelites from the Pharaoh's army. And by this fiery cloud the Lord himself protected Israel from their destructive intents. As the waters parted, the whole nation of Israel entered the waters which were to save them from the Egyptians. By dawn they had all crossed the sea and reached the shore on the other side. This same water destroyed both Pharaoh and his complete army.

The end of hundreds of years of slavery came with the destruction of the enemy in the water. How clearly did this event foretell how we are saved from the slavery to Satan and sin through the waters of baptism! And how majestic was the cloud, the Spirit hovering over the waters!

[In the night watch just before dawn the LORD cast through the column of the fiery cloud upon the Egyptian force a glance that threw it into a panic; and he so clogged their chariot wheels that they could hardly drive. With that the Egyptians sounded the retreat before Israel, because the LORD was fighting for them against the Egyptians. Ex 14,23-24](#)

God's own nation was delivered as a newborn baby from its mother's womb! And just as a newborn baby comes forth out of the water into this world, so this new nation came forth out of the waters of the red sea into existence as an independent nation.

[I do not want you to be unaware, brothers that our ancestors were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and all of them were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 1.Cor 10,1-2](#)

And so we see how the children of Israel were saved from the Egyptians, not through the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb, but by passing through the sea. They, as God's chosen nation, were baptized into Moses in the water and spirit (the cloud).

How many people have believed on Jesus, but have never come out of Egypt? O, that the preachers of the Gospel would once again rock this earth as in the days of Peter and Paul! How violent they were in destroying the army of the enemy! How diligent they were in baptizing those who believed their message! Let nobody wonder why the church is still under the slavery of sin! Would not Pharaoh have totally destroyed anything God may have done, if they had refused the baptism of Moses? How much more have the enemies of the church, Satan and the powers of darkness, been able to keep their hold on so many through the deception of an infant

¹⁰ The Egyptians, then, pursued them; Pharaoh's whole army, his horses, chariots and charioteers, caught up with them as they lay encamped by the sea, at Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon. Ex 14,9

baptism! And what better way to steal the power of salvation which happens in baptism by bringing forth a counterfeit baptism, void of any such power!

And so it is today. Resting assured they have been redeemed from Satan and his kingdom by the merits of a child baptism, many remain in his kingdom and yet attend church on a regular basis. Should it surprise us that such a church cannot be compared to what we read in Luke's book of Acts? Has this not brought onto the harvest fields of wheat countless weeds? What happened to God's ordination of a single door leading into the Arc?

How important it is today, that we make no compromises with darkness, but rather destroy the works of Satan! Through a lack of faithfulness to what Jesus and the apostles taught on baptism and discipleship we must today differentiate between the true church, through which we enter only through baptism, and the countless church structures. Unfortunately, instead of pure obedience to Christ as our head, the church has allowed herself to be filled with the tradition of men. Empty deception has brought to countless church members a different Christian philosophy, totally foreign to the understanding of discipleship taught by Jesus and the apostles. The church structure is today more similar to an organization, built according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than on obedience to Christ as her head. The oath of baptism is a complete oath, he is totally Lord over our lives and we are totally his servants. And only because of our adamant conviction are we thereby circumcised by God's hand in the removal of the body of the flesh¹¹, being buried with Him in baptism.

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. Col 2,8-12 NAS

How great a victory would have been won if the people of Israel had not listened to Moses, if they had not crossed the Red Sea? As Israel saw the army of Pharaoh approaching, they cried out:

"Were there no burial places in Egypt that you had to bring us out here to die in the desert? Why did you do this to us? Why did you bring us out of Egypt? Did we not tell you this in Egypt, when we said, 'Leave us alone. Let us serve the Egyptians'? Far better for us to be the slaves of the Egyptians than to die in the desert." Ex 14,11b-12

The Passover without the crossing of the Red Sea would have only worsened the state of the Israelites. And in a true sense, it would have been better for Moses to have left them alone, unless he could bring them complete and lasting freedom from Egypt.

Believing on Jesus and yet not obeying his command to be baptized is comparable. It would have been better to never have known of freedom from sin than to have known of it and yet not be able to live free from it!

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For

¹¹ Gal 5,24 Now those who belong to Christ (Jesus) have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires.

if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Rom 6,4-7

God has ordained that we, being saved by Jesus¹², be totally freed from sin¹³ as the Israelites were totally freed from their Egyptian taskmasters. For this very reason each individual person who believes on Jesus is to experience in their personal life the crossing of the Red Sea, being baptized into the death of Jesus and hereby coming free from the slavery of sin.

But thanks be to God that, although you were once slaves of sin, you have become obedient from the heart to the pattern of teaching to which you were entrusted. Freed from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness. Rom 6,17-18

¹² Mt 1,21 She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

¹³ Rev 1,5b To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,

IN THE WILDERNESS

What happened after the people of Israel were baptized into Moses, and thereby freed from their slavery to the Egyptians? How were they now to receive their food? And where in this wilderness were they to find water to drink? The cloud and fiery pillar, which first appeared to them the day of the Passover, while they were still in Egypt, was continually visible. Following this pillar they left Egypt. And this pillar led them to the Red Sea. As they went through the Red Sea, they were escorted by this pillar. And when in danger of the Egyptians, the pillar came between them and the army of Pharaoh.

Now that the Lord had delivered them from the Egyptians, what was he going to do with them? Yes, the Lord had led them out of their slavery, but now what?

For the next three days, after leaving the victory of the Red Sea, they found themselves without water, following the cloud and fiery pillar through the desert of Shur.

Immediately following their baptism, they were led into the wilderness to be tested. After three days of going without water, in their thoughts they were being tempted not to trust the one who was leading them.

[As the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?" he appealed to the LORD, who pointed out to him a certain piece of wood. When he threw this into the water, the water became fresh. It was here that the LORD, in making rules and regulations for them, put them to the test. Ex 15,24-25](#)

Was it not the Spirit which led Jesus in the wilderness to be tested, directly after he was baptized? God promised the Israelites, even before they began their journey, that he was to lead them into the land of Canaan, a land which flowed with milk and honey. But God did not restrict Satan, that he might not tempt them. From the temptation of Satan he did not even spare his only Son, but rather led him directly into this temptation¹⁴. And so he did with his beloved Israel, his chosen people. For without learning to overcome Satan's temptations, we will never be able to receive from God true faith. As the showers of temptation are falling, can we not gather from the grown exceedingly precious jewels by choosing to trust in the Lord with all of our hearts?

There is no lie that Satan may not tell us. It is our responsibility to be faithful to the oath we made in our baptism. It is our privilege to expose his lies as we resist him. And only by being tested can our trust in him be perfected. Do not count it a surprise, if after your baptism you encounter great temptations and deceptions! Count this as a very special privilege! Most of the people never even reach the door leading into the ark because of Satan's temptations. Do you think, just because you have now entered it, that he will no longer lie to you? If the strongest temptations and deception came to Jesus just following his baptism, may it be also with you! For you are called to follow him in his very footsteps. And these very temptations will make solid in your life the righteousness which you received by faith. As Satan brought his identity as the Son of God in question, will he not do the same to you? Are you really now born anew as a Son of God? Have you really been freed from sin? Are you not still your old self? You were the old sinner, you still are the old sinner and you will always remain the old sinner. Yet the Spirit of truth whispers into your ear the word of God, just as the Spirit whispered into the ear Jesus. [So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; 2.Cor 5,16a](#)

¹⁴ Mt 4,1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

And so it was with the people of Israel. Because the Lord wanted to bestow upon them great riches, they were brought through great affliction and testing. But since they were so often unfaithful to him in their testing, he did not let them enter into the land promised to their fathers.

The LORD, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery; who guided you through the vast and terrible desert with its saraph serpents and scorpions, its parched and waterless ground; who brought forth water for you from the flinty rock and fed you in the desert with manna, a food unknown to your fathers, that he might afflict you and test you, but also make you prosperous in the end. Deut 8,15b-17

We need patience in our testing and steadfastness if we are to be inheritors with Christ. The bountiful promises we receive in our baptism will only be inherited if we fulfill that for which we were baptized, living as disciples of Jesus Christ and doing in our lives the will of God, just as Jesus. Let us not fall as the Israelites did because of their unbelief, but rather enter into the Promised Land and inherit the fullness of what the Father and Jesus have for us.

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Rom 8,32

How many people did God now have to provide for? There were over six hundred thousand men, not counting the Levites¹⁵, the women and children?¹⁶ How much water do three million people need? And how much food? Yet as long as you have the confidence that the pillar is leading you, you can rest assured that He, the Almighty God, will take good care of you, even in the wilderness. Nothing is impossible for God.

Would not the whole nation of Israel have died in the wilderness, if God had not provided water for them? And through this water they lived. So has God, through his Spirit, provided for us the water of baptism, whereby we, who were dead in our sins, rise with Christ in newness of life, to live forever!

And so after these three days of drought, after testing them, he brought them to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water. Is not the same God who often leads us through the valley of the shadow of death also the one who afterwards comforts us on green pastures by the safe waters¹⁷? And was not even Jesus, after his temptations, comforted and strengthened by angels¹⁸?

¹⁵ Num 1,45-46 The total number of the Israelites of twenty years or more who were fit for military service, registered by ancestral houses, was six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty. The Levites, however, were not registered by ancestral tribe with the others.

¹⁶ Ex 12,37 The Israelites set out from Rameses for Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, not counting the children.

¹⁷ Ps 23,2 In green pastures you let me graze; to safe waters you lead me;

¹⁸ Mt 4,11 Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

A TIME OF TESTING

On the twenty eighth day of their Exodus the pillar again moved and left Elim. This time the pillar led them again into the desert, the desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai. And the whole community was grumbling against Moses and Aaron that they would rather be back in Egypt, where they had bread and could eat out of their fleshpots.¹⁹ After totally failing the first test, God in his patience was preparing the second test through which he might endow upon them his glory. And the pillar cloud, the LORD, spoke to Moses, [I will now rain down bread from heaven for you. Each day the people are to go out and gather their daily portion; thus will I test them, to see whether they follow my instructions or not. Ex 16,4](#)

The cloud and fiery pillar had first appeared to Moses as a small fire in a thorn bush. Aaron told the congregation to present themselves before the Lord, because he has heard their grumbings and would answer them by giving them flesh in the evening and bread in the morning. At this moment the cloud was in the desert and both Moses and Aaron saw the glory of the LORD appear in the cloud! Again in these tests the people failed. God told them to gather it fresh every day, and nobody was to keep any of it for the next day. Many of them did not regard his instruction, and they found on the next day it was full of worms²⁰. God also commanded them to not gather the bread on the Sabbath, but that what they had already gathered Friday would be enough for two days. So, on Friday night they were permitted to keep it for the next day. And, different than any of the other days of the week, Saturday morning there were no worms in the bread. Yet many did not regard the Word of the Lord and went out Saturday looking for bread, but, different than any of the other days of the week, found none.

Simply being baptized is meaningless, if we do not pass our tests of faith. We were baptized because we chose to become one of Jesus' disciples. If we do not hold faithfully to Jesus as our Lord, then our baptism will become like manna filled with worms. We made in our baptism an oath and thereby received Jesus as our Lord. Therefore our baptism is only meaningful to us if we keep our oath and following Jesus as Lord of our lives. And this is what God has ordained. Just as the Israelites followed the fiery pillar and cloud (the Holy Spirit), so those who are born of the water and the Spirit, follow the Holy Spirit²¹.

Even though the people of Israel were baptized into Moses, because of their disbelief they failed their tests and thereby God could not give them the fullness of what he intended. The Israelites did not understand that the reason God brought the tests is because of his great love for them and he knows that only through being steadfast in temptations can we be entrusted with the eternal riches.

[Blessed is the man who perseveres in temptation, for when he has been proved he will receive the crown of life that he promised to those who love him. Jam 1,12](#)

If we trust God in our tests and are faithful to him in temptation, our faith will bring forth fruit more precious than gold. God did not ordain that those who were freed from sin should be spared from temptations. Rather it is through the tests and temptations that we are perfected. It is through our continual battle against the powers of darkness that we will grow in our strength

¹⁹ Ex 16,3 The Israelites said to them, "Would that we had died at the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, as we sat by our fleshpots and ate our fill of bread! But you had to lead us into this desert to make the whole community die of famine!"

²⁰ Ex 16,20 But they would not listen to him. When some kept a part of it over until the following morning, it became wormy and rotten. Therefore Moses was displeased with them.

²¹ Rom 8,14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

as disciples of Jesus. Even Jesus was not spared in temptations, but was tempted in every point like as ourselves. Because of the heavenly riches which God wished to bestow on him, he was sorely tempted and tested. Yet, in all of these testings he did not sin, but rather was perfected.

[For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin. Hebr 4,15](#)

By being baptized we become disciples of Jesus. It is our entrance in the school of God, where Jesus is the principal and the Holy Spirit is the teacher. A disciple is a whole-hearted follower of Jesus, where obedience to him is in the first place of our lives.

["If any one comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Lk 14,26](#)

The command of Jesus on his church is to make disciples of all nations. This command includes also the preaching of the gospel and baptizing those who believe the message and choose to become disciples of Jesus. It is not possible to have Jesus as Lord of our lives and not be disciples.²² If we are not living as disciples, yet have been baptized, we are only deceiving ourselves if we think Jesus is Lord of our lives. If Jesus is Lord²³ of our lives, then we are his disciples and we remain in his word²⁴.

[Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, Hebr 5,8-9](#)

If we obey Jesus as our Lord, our eternal salvation is certain. From the day we are baptized and make the oath of allegiance to Jesus as our Lord we have eternal life. Our names are written into a legislative book as we make the oath of marriage. How much more so are our names written into the book of life as we make our oath to Jesus and are baptized? Yet even a marriage has only meaning if both, the man and the woman are faithful to their oath. And in the very same matter our eternal destiny will be decided in accordance to this oath.

In our school of obedience, one of the very first lessons is giving thanks in everything.²⁵ Having our eyes opened to the eternal value of being faithful, all circumstances become tools in the hands of the Holy Spirit, that our faithfulness mature and we be perfected. Thereby we learn to overcome in all circumstances and find ourselves following the footsteps of Jesus.

[Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. And let perseverance be perfect, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. Jam 1,2-4](#)

As Paul had just suffered being whipped and thrown in jail he was full of an unspeakable joy. It was because of this exceedingly great joy, that he had been counted worthy to suffer for Christ that he and Silas broke out at midnight in loud praises. He didn't care if his loud singing would wake up the other prisoners. He didn't even care if this would increase his punishment. He was full of an unspeakable joy and cried out in this joy to the Lord in heaven.

²² Joh 4,1 Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John

²³ Lk 6,46 Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' but not do what I command?

²⁴ Joh 8,31 Jesus then said to those Jews who believed in him, "If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

²⁵ 1.Thess 5,18 In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of (your) faith, the salvation of your souls. 1.Petr 1,6-8

If we yield to temptations our faith will be destroyed. And if we fall into disbelief, we will not inherit that which God has promised us. No matter how sincerely someone may want to be baptized, they will still need to count the cost²⁶. They need to know, their decision to become a disciple will cost them everything²⁷. And for this very reason, because those who crossed the red sea with Moses were not faithful, the promise which they had been given they did not inherit, but died in the wilderness.

To pass our tests, it is very important that we receive as newborn babies, the milk of God's word. When the tempter comes we can answer him, just as Jesus did, with the words 'It is written'.

The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." He said in reply, "It is written: 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'" Mt 4,3,4

What gifts are there which God can give to us that are more valuable than righteousness, holiness, steadfastness, faithfulness? And for this very reason he brings those that he loves into many trials. Righteousness and holiness cannot be given to us without us being steadfast in resisting the tempter. Should we not cry out to God, 'bring into my life as many trials as possible'? Is there anything that should bring us more joy than being bestowed with eternal glory, whereby we shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of our Father forever²⁸?

He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. Rev 3,21 NAS

What more can Jesus give us, his bride, than to sit down on the throne of the Almighty God at his side? And for this reason our lives are filled with trials and temptations, that we might learn daily, just as Jesus did, to overcome. We become thereby aware that all things, all circumstances, all hardships and sufferings, are working together for good because of our love for Jesus and his heavenly calling in our lives. For we have been called, as the bride, to be conformed to the image of Jesus.

We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Rom 8,28-29

²⁶ Lk 14,28,33 Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion?... In the same way, everyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.

²⁷ Mt 13,45,46 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.

²⁸ Mt 13,43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear.

THE LAVER

As Moses was on the mountain, the LORD told Moses to have the Israelites make him a sanctuary. This is where he, visible as the fiery pillar of cloud, would find residence in their midst.

[They shall make a sanctuary for me, that I may dwell in their midst. This Dwelling and all its furnishings you shall make exactly according to the pattern that I will now show you. Ex 25,8,9](#)

Moses was charged to make it exactly as he was shown on the mountain. The LORD told Moses that he would speak his commandments to them from directly above the mercy seat, between the two Cherubim²⁹. This is a shadow of that heavenly mercy seat, where the sacrifice of his Son Jesus has brought atonement for the sins of us all.

God, who dwells in an indescribable glory in heaven, wanted his dwelling place on this earth to be a shadow of it. How simple was the tent of the tabernacle as the dwelling place of the fiery pillar!

And from this earthly mercy seat all of the other commandments were given to the Israelites, all of which were shadows of his heavenly dwelling. And later, after the dwelling was finished and the LORD himself filled the sanctuary, the LORD would speak to Moses, his voice coming from that place above the mercy seat³⁰.

Is not the church that heavenly house which Jesus built together with his Father³¹? Did not Jesus follow the pattern exactly as his Father showed him, similar to Noah instructing his sons in building the Ark? Was not the center point of the sanctuary that place above the mercy seat? And is not the center point of the church Jesus, who died for our sins and rose for our justification?

As the house of Moses was then complete, before the priests could attire themselves with their holy garments, and before they could enter into his courts, the LORD gave Moses the commandments concerning the laver of water.

[For ablutions³² you shall make a bronze laver with a bronze base. Place it between the meeting tent and the altar, and put water in it. Ex 30,18](#)

The bronze laver (large bath) belongs between the altar and the tent. After making the sacrifice you must wash yourselves in this laver before entering the tent. This is the shadow for the entrance into the eternal, heavenly church. The gospel brings to the world the glorious message of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. They that believe the gospel are then led to the water of baptism. By repenting and being baptized, our sins are forgiven and we are added to the church³³.

[Aaron and his sons shall use it in washing their hands and feet. When they are about to enter the meeting tent, they must wash with water, lest they die. Likewise when they approach the altar in](#)

²⁹ There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel. Ex 25,22

³⁰ Lev 1,1 Then the LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying,

³¹ Hebr 3,6 but Christ was faithful as a son placed over his house. We are his house, if (only) we hold fast to our confidence and pride in our hope.

³² Ablutions are washings done as a religious ritual that a person may be purified or absolved himself from the guilt of some particular act. (www.dictionary.com)

³³ Act 2,41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day.

their ministry, to offer an oblation to the LORD, they must wash their hands and feet, lest they die. This shall be a perpetual ordinance for him and his descendants throughout their generations. Ex 30,19-21

Why is the punishment death for those entering the tent without washing first in the laver? And why does God cut off from his people those refusing to be circumcised? Are not both foretelling of the covenant we make in the water of baptism? How harsh does this appear to us! Those who disobey God's commandment to first wash in the laver before entering the tent are to die!

Does this not reveal something very important in God's heart? He has ordained that the church be his dwelling place on the earth and that nobody may enter his dwelling place without being baptized. He has ordained that nobody take of the holy body and blood of Jesus, unless they have become his disciples and have been cleansed by baptism from their sins.

Does this not answer the question of why God does not recognize the baptism of infants? And does this also not answer the question of why it is important that we baptize people by immersion? For God has not only ordained who we are to baptize, but also how we are to baptize. He has placed the Laver himself before the entrance to the tent. And according to the eternal Word of God, this Laver is for all who repent and believe on Jesus. They will be cleansed in this Laver by the blood of Jesus from their sins. The old man will be crucified with Christ in the water of this Laver. And in this same water we will be united with Christ in his resurrection.

God did not make this laver for infants, but for those who would believe the gospel. And God did not establish the eternal covenant by sprinkling, but rather by dipping. Any other laver we shall refuse as a counterfeit, with the threat of eternal death for those who disobey his commandment concerning baptism.

With this sacred anointing oil you shall anoint the meeting tent and the ark of the commandments, the table and all its appurtenances, the lamp stand and its appurtenances, the altar of incense and the altar of holocausts with all its appurtenances, and the laver with its base. When you have consecrated them, they shall be most sacred; whatever touches them shall be sacred. Ex 30,26-29

What are the most holy vessels belonging to God's sanctuary? Are there not seven in total? And what did they foretell, the tent, the ark, the table with the bread, the lamp stand, the altar of incense, the altar of sacrifice and the laver? Is not the tent a shadow of the church, the dwelling place of the LORD himself? And does not the ark declare the atoning death of Jesus, and his commandments, which is the most important foundation of the church? Were not the words Jesus spoke directly before he was crucified the commandments of God being spoken from the place above the mercy seat? And shortly after his crucifixion, was he not received up in heaven, from where he now speaks to his church, behind the veil, as both Lord and head of the church? The table with the bread, does not this foretell of the body of Jesus broken for the life of the world? And are not all that partake of his body and blood themselves members of this one bread? And is not the light coming from the lamp stand the presence of the Holy Spirit, who himself teaches³⁴ and leads each member³⁵ of the church? The altar of incense, is not this the intercession of the saints walking in their priestly office? Is not the church called the house of

³⁴ 1.Joh 2,27 As for you, the anointing that you received from him remains in you, so that you do not need anyone to teach you. But his anointing teaches you about everything and is true and not false; just as it taught you, remain in him.

³⁵ Rom 8,14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

prayer by all peoples³⁶? The altar of sacrifice outside the tent, is not this where the sin offering and the burnt offering is made, where people are reconciled to God by the priests? Is not this altar the ministry of reconciliation given to the ambassadors of Christ³⁷, who carry forth the vessels of the LORD into the world³⁸?

The seventh of these most sacred vessels is the laver^{vi}. And whoever wishes to approach the other vessels must first be washed in the laver, lest he die. Here we see how it is baptism which separates the unclean from the clean, the sinner from the saint and the world from the church. Those commanded to carry forth the vessels of the LORD are commanded to baptize those who believe, that they might be saved. The church in her mission on earth carries forth the laver as a most sacred vessel. Only those who believe their message may enter its purifying water. And just as the priest did not have access to any of the other six sacred articles without first being washed, so has God ordained that we must first be cleansed of our sins by the water of baptism to enter the church, to receive the atoning sacrifice for our sins, to receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit³⁹, to partake of his blood and body, to enter our priestly office of intercession and to be ambassadors of Christ with the ministry of reconciliation.

What is this most sacred laver that those who refuse to be washed must die? Is not the water of this laver the place God has ordained that his saints receive their atonement? The priest makes the sin and burnt offerings for the people on the altar. The ministers of the gospel make intercessions for the people, they proclaim Jesus and his atoning sacrifice on the cross and they proclaim his resurrection from the dead and therewith eternal life. Those sinners who believe their message, who accept their ministry of reconciliation, come to the water and receive thereby as they enter the covenant the atonement for their sins. It is into this water that they are buried with Christ, into the water they are crucified with Christ and they die to sin. And it is out of this water that they rise with Christ as saints, with their new identity as Sons of God, born of the Holy Spirit.

And what was this most Holy Laver made of? Was it not made from the bronze mirrors of the women who served at the entrance of the meeting tent?

[The bronze laver, with its bronze base, was made from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance of the meeting tent. Ex 38,8](#)

And so the atoning water of baptism is made available by those members of the bride who look at themselves carefully in the mirror, assuring that they cause for the others no obstacle for the gospel⁴⁰. They assure that their lives are holy and without blame, lest they bring reproach on the name of the LORD⁴¹. And thereby those who carry the vessels of the LORD purify themselves.

³⁶ Isa 56,7 Them I will bring to my holy mountain and make joyful in my house of prayer; Their holocausts and sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar, For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

³⁷ 2.Cor 5,18-21 And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

³⁸ Isa 52,10-11 The LORD has bared his holy arm in the sight of all the nations; All the ends of the earth will behold the salvation of our God. Depart, depart, come forth from there, touch nothing unclean! Out from there! Purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of the LORD.

³⁹ Act 2,38 Peter (said) to them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit.

⁴⁰ 1.Cor 9,12b On the contrary, we endure everything so as not to place an obstacle to the gospel of Christ.

⁴¹ Isa 52,5b their rulers make a boast of it, says the LORD; all the day my name is constantly reviled.

Before the LORD entered his sanctuary, Moses was commanded first to place the laver between the meeting tent and the altar⁴². Both the altar and the laver were outside the tent, yet all other vessels were only available after you entered the tent. So it is with our priestly ministry of reconciliation. Through us losing our lives for the gospel, we make available to those who are dead in their sins and trespasses the fullness of what Christ accomplished through his atonement. The sacrifice behind the veil happened only once. And Christ was offered once for the sins of all generations. But on the altar outside of the tent sacrifices were made daily, mostly sin offerings and burnt offerings, for the individuals who had sinned. And so has God ordained, that although Christ was sacrificed only once, this sacrifice brings atonement for sins to those who repent at different times in people's lives. The sacrifices of the altar brought forgiveness for the sinful deeds of the Israelites just as the blood of Jesus cleanses⁴³ those who believe the gospel and are baptized, provided they confess their sins and turn from them⁴⁴. And in this very way Jesus did not die only for the sins of the church, but for the sins of the world⁴⁵. It is through the preaching of the gospel that both the altar and the laver are accessible to the world, and therefore they are both at the entrance of the tent.

And then the laver was anointed and consecrated, ready for use⁴⁶. Immediately afterwards, before Aaron and his sons were clothed with their priestly garments, they were first to be washed by the water of the laver.

[Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the meeting tent, and there wash them with water. Clothe Aaron with the sacred vestments and anoint him, thus consecrating him as my priest. Ex 40,12-13](#)

After Aaron was washed, he was clothed with the priestly garments and then anointed. And so we are baptized, being clothed with Christ⁴⁷, our priestly garment, and anointed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. And thus the priesthood of Aaron foretold a new priesthood, and the priestly clothes of Aaron the clothing which we receive from Christ himself. For when we are baptized, we are crucified with Christ. No longer do we live, but Christ lives and intercedes in us. And in our crying out for those who are lost, God the Father sees in us Jesus interceding for the ungodly. And his name is invoked upon us⁴⁸, similar to how a woman receives the name of her husband through marriage and may act in the authority of his name⁴⁹.

[But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 1.Petr 2,9](#)

And thereby, as members of his living sanctuary built with living stones, we have become a holy priesthood offering to God on the behalf of those not yet delivered from the kingdom of darkness.

[Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1.Petr 2,4-5](#)

⁴² Ex 40,7 Place the laver between the meeting tent and the altar, and put water in it.

⁴³ Act 22,16 Now, why delay? Get up and have yourself baptized and your sins washed away, calling upon his name.

⁴⁴ Prov 28,13 He who conceals his sins prospers not, but he who confesses and forsakes them obtains mercy.

⁴⁵ 1 Joh 2,2 And he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.

⁴⁶ Ex 40,11 Likewise, anoint the laver with its base, and thus consecrate it.

⁴⁷ Gal 3,27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

⁴⁸ Jam 2,7 Is it not they who blaspheme the noble name that was invoked over you?

⁴⁹ These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. Mk 16,18

Moses set up the altar and made sacrifices upon it and then he set up the laver.

He placed the laver between the meeting tent and the altar, and put water in it for washing. Moses and Aaron and his sons used to wash their hands and feet there, for they washed themselves whenever they went into the meeting tent or approached the altar, as the LORD had commanded Moses. Ex 40,32

Moses placed the laver between the meeting tent and the altar. Then he put up the curtain at the entrance of the court, this finishing all the work. Then the cloud covered the meeting tent, and the glory of the LORD filled the Dwelling. Moses could not enter the meeting tent, because the cloud settled down upon it and the glory of the LORD filled the Dwelling.⁵⁰

Before the LORD came and covered the meeting tent with his glory, the laver had to be in its proper place. And so it was in the establishing of the true, heavenly church on earth. Before the coming of the LORD John the Baptist had prepared the way by bringing the laver to the entrance before the tent. And after Jesus rose from the dead he commanded his disciples to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them three times underneath the water, in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son and in the name of the Holy Spirit. After giving this commission, Jesus was shortly thereafter received up in heaven. Yet the LORD had prepared everything, all the vessels of the LORD had been placed in their proper place. After completing his work, he told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, where the LORD would fill the heavenly tent, his church, with his presence. And as the day of Pentecost came, the LORD filled his house with his presence and glory.

Whenever the cloud rose from the Dwelling, the Israelites would set out on their journey. But if the cloud did not lift, they would not go forward; only when it lifted did they go forward. In the daytime the cloud of the LORD was seen over the Dwelling; whereas at night, fire was seen in the cloud by the whole house of Israel in all the stages of their journey. Ex 40,36-38

In God's perseverance he has seen how the enemy has destroyed his vessels in his church. And we find ourselves today saying that which Gideon once said, 'Where is the LORD? If the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are his wondrous deeds of which our fathers told us?'⁵¹ By destroying the laver not only has the entrance to the tent been also destroyed, but the tent itself! As the dark era of the church began, the laver which the LORD had set up slowly disappeared and a false laver, where babies were baptized, became visible. After centuries of darkness, even the form of baptism in water disappeared and pouring or sprinkling became the practice. Having hidden the place where the atonement happens, the enemy filled the once holy church with many people of the world and the church became a huge Christian structure. And today most people do not even see the church, but rather traditional Christian structures.

Is not the church those who have believed the gospel and repented from their sins, living stones? And is it not through being baptized that we become members of this living temple, the body of Christ? What then are these huge Christian structures we see today? And why are those who hold fast to the pattern given to his church by Jesus in baptizing those who believe the gospel considered outsiders? Is it not these structures which have rejected the true laver? And are not the preachers of the gospel refused entrance into many of these structures unless they are willing to leave behind the laver, baptizing again those who were once baptized as infants?

⁵⁰ Ex 40,33-35

⁵¹ Judg 6,13a "My Lord," Gideon said to him, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are his wondrous deeds of which our fathers told us

Without baptism in its proper place, the church is not the church, the tent is not the tent and the altar is not the altar. If God ordained that the atonement happen in the laver, and yet the laver is rejected, then where does the atonement happen?

But when the goodness and kindness of God our Savior appeared, not by the works of justice, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost; DRB

Properly administered, in its proper place, we are saved by the laver of regeneration. Not only are we saved from our sins but our names are written in the book of life and we are saved from eternal damnation.

How cunning is the enemy of the church, and how very wicked is his deception! How many sincere people are robbed of the atonement and the forgiveness of their sins which happens in the laver! For how better can Satan prevent people from entering the church than by deceiving them that, by the merit of an infant baptism or a sprinkling, that they are already in the church? And how well he guards the way to eternal life by giving so many convincing arguments, preventing so many from being saved by the laver of regeneration! How glad he is when many settle for a different baptism than that which Jesus and the apostles practiced! He will do anything to prevent those from leaving his kingdom and entering the kingdom of God! And every one of his arguments have similar lies. 'Is baptism really necessary for salvation?' accept their baby baptism and thereby refuse the laver of regeneration! Is this not similar to the Israelites resisting and even killing the prophets?

As the darkness culminated, those who re-baptized were hunted for and killed by those in church structures. The Anabaptists were considered enemies of the church and in the 16th and 17th century publicly burned or drowned.

Can such a church expect the LORD to come again in his glorious presence? Is such a church able to put the vessels of the LORD back into their proper places? Will not it rather be similar to Israel as Jesus came? Did not he and his disciples cause countless structural earthquakes? How many of the synagogues did Jesus teach in? Did not Jesus come to his temple daily shortly before his death? Many of those belonging to the synagogues became his disciples! The church was born directly in the midst of a traditional structure.

Where is then the proper place of the laver?

Is it not before the entrance of the church? Was the laver inside the tent? No! When were those in the time of the early church baptized? Was it not on the day they believed the gospel? Who amongst all the thousands baptized in the New Testament was baptized the second or third day? Were they not all baptized the same day? And why was Paul not baptized as the Lord met him on his way to Damascus? Was it not only for that reason that angels, and even Jesus himself, cannot baptize, but only his disciples? And for this reason the Lord sent the disciple Ananias to Paul. And what did he say to Paul as he saw his faith?

And now why tarriest thou? Rise up, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, invoking his name. DRB

Is it not unmistakable in the writings of the Apostles, that baptism was not practiced in the church, but rather by those who were sent to preach the gospel, the disciples? And so has God ordained that the laver be placed in its correct place, before the entrance to the tent. Only then

will we see again, as in every example in Acts, that people are baptized the day they believe, as the Spirit of God sends those who preach the gospel.

THE ORDINATION OF THE LEVITES

How were the Levites ordained to be ministers of the LORD? Was it not by a special water, which would remit their sins?

Take the Levites from among the Israelites and purify them. This is what you shall do to them to purify them. Sprinkle them with the water of remission; then have them shave their whole bodies and wash their clothes, and so purify themselves. Num 8,6-7

Was this the lustral water, the water mixed with the ashes of the red heifer? Did not the LORD give the command concerning the red heifer shortly before the death of Aaron, shortly before the LORD placed upon Eleazar the breastplate as High Priest? Yet this water was used by Aaron while he performed all of the duties of the High Priest himself!

For what were the Levites being ordained? Was it not for the service of the LORD's sanctuary?

Num 8,8

They shall take a young bull, along with its cereal offering of fine flour mixed with oil; you shall take another young bull for a sin offering.

Num 8,9

Then have the Levites come forward in front of the meeting tent, where you shall assemble also the whole community of the Israelites.

Num 8,10

While the Levites are present before the LORD, the Israelites shall lay their hands upon them.

Num 8,11

Let Aaron then offer the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the Israelites, thus devoting them to the service of the LORD.

Num 8,12

The Levites in turn shall lay their hands on the heads of the bullocks, which shall then be immolated, the one as a sin offering and the other as a holocaust to the LORD, in atonement for the Levites.

Num 8,13

Thus, then, shall you have the Levites stand before Aaron and his sons, to be offered as a wave offering to the LORD;

Num 8,14

and thus shall you set aside the Levites from the rest of the Israelites, that they may be mine.

Num 8,15

"Only then shall the Levites enter upon their service in the meeting tent. You shall purify them and offer them as a wave offering;

Num 8,16

because they, among the Israelites, are strictly dedicated to me; I have taken them for myself in place of every first-born that opens the womb among the Israelites.

Num 8,17

Indeed, all the first-born among the Israelites, both of man and of beast, belong to me; I consecrated them to myself on the day I slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt.

Num 8,18

But in place of all the first-born Israelites I have taken the Levites;

Num 8,19

and I have given these dedicated Israelites to Aaron and his sons to discharge the duties of the Israelites in the meeting tent and to make atonement for them, so that no plague may strike among the Israelites should they come near the sanctuary."

Num 8,20

Thus, then, did Moses and Aaron and the whole community of the Israelites deal with the Levites, carrying out exactly the command which the LORD had given Moses concerning them.

Num 8,21

When the Levites had cleansed themselves of sin and washed their clothes, Aaron offered them as a wave offering before the LORD, and made atonement for them to purify them.

Num 8,22

Only then did they enter upon their service in the meeting tent under the supervision of Aaron and his sons. The command which the LORD had given Moses concerning the Levites was carried out.

Num 8,23

The LORD said to Moses:

Num 8,24

"This is the rule for the Levites. Each from his twenty-fifth year onward shall perform the required service in the meeting tent.

Num 8,25

When he is fifty years old, he shall retire from the required service and work no longer.

Num 8,26

His service with his fellow Levites shall consist in sharing their responsibilities in the meeting tent, but he shall not do the work. This, then, is how you are to regulate the duties of the Levites."

This water

T

THE ORDINATION OF PRIESTS

What must the priests do before being dressed with their priestly garments? Is it not imperative that they first be washed in the laver?

Moses told them what the LORD had ordered to be done. Bringing forward Aaron and his sons, he first washed them with water. Then he put the tunic on Aaron, girded him with the sash, clothed him with the robe, placed the ephod on him, and girded him with the embroidered belt of the ephod, fastening it around him. He then set the breastpiece on him, with the Urim and Thummim in it Lev 8,5-8

After washing^{vii} them in the laver, they were dressed with their priestly garments. Then Moses anointed the tent, the altar, the laver and then Aaron. His anointing for the office of priest followed the anointing first of the tent, the altar and the laver. Is it not so, that the Holy Spirit anoints those of the church who preach the gospel? And then those who are baptized are born of that same Holy Spirit and in this anointing are called into their priesthood and dressed in the righteousness of Christ! For in the church, we are all a royal priesthood, all called to make spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

And thus, the ordination of Aaron took seven days. And the whole congregation of Israel partook of his ordination at the entrance of the tent. And as the seven days were completed, again the glory of the LORD appeared to the complete congregation.

Then the glory of the LORD was revealed to all the people. Fire came forth from the LORD'S presence and consumed the holocaust and the remnants of the fat on the altar. Seeing this, all the people cried out and fell prostrate. Lev 9,23a-24

Because of the obedience of Moses to the Word of the LORD, the LORD could reveal himself to the whole assembly. Is not this even more so in our ordination as priests of the living God? How angry the LORD is, when we do no longer baptize those who believe the gospel, but rather infants? How could we provoke the LORD to greater anger than changing the form of baptism to a mere pouring of water over the head? Who gave us the command to baptize those who do not believe? And who, of all those living on the earth are able to believe less than an infant? Who could show less interest in being baptized? Is not an infant much more interested in having milk from his mother than having water poured over his head?

Even after being ordained, the priests had to wash in the laver before even approaching the other vessels of the LORD. The punishment for disobedience to this command was death. How much more shall we be judged worthy of death for ignoring God's command concerning baptism, the entrance into the eternal kingdom of God?

Two of the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, did not understand the importance of strict obedience to the Word of the LORD. And in their ignorance they made incense differently than as the LORD had commanded.

During this time Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers and, strewing incense on the fire they had put in them, they offered up before the LORD profane fire, such as he had not authorized. Fire therefore came forth from the LORD'S presence and consumed them, so that they died in his presence. Moses then said to Aaron, "This is as the LORD said: Through those who approach me I will manifest my sacredness; In the sight of all the people I will reveal my glory." Lev 10,1-3a

Should not this be a warning to us that we should cease from following traditions and return to obeying the voice of the LORD? Even if the LORD hides his face of embarrassment from us on the earth, he will certainly not spare us from knowing of his anger when we stand before him on the Day of Judgment!

And so it is imperative as priests of the LORD that we adhere to his Word. If we swerve to the left or to the right and are deceived, we cannot expect the LORD to hear us and confirm us as his priests. A priest of the LORD only has authority when doing that which the LORD has authorized him to do. The sons of Aaron had been washed in the laver; they had been clothed with their priestly garments. Yet because they approached the LORD in a presumptuous manner, doing that which he had not authorized, they were slain by fire coming forth from the LORD's presence.

Again, Korah and Abiram, levites, were also presumptuous concerning the priestly service. They all belonged to the tribe of Levite and were set aside for the service of the LORD. They did not belong to the house of Aaron, nor had they been washed in the laver and dressed with the priestly garments. Yet they wished to make offerings to the LORD. And so they tempted the LORD, saying, '[the whole community, all of them, are holy, the LORD is in their midst. Why then should you set yourselves over the LORD's congregation](#)⁵²? Two hundred and fifty of the leaders of the Levites, representing certainly a good portion of the whole tribe, wished also to partake in the service to the LORD as priests. But they did not do this in obedience to the Word of the LORD. Taking their censers they also offered incense, thinking the LORD would be pleased with them and confirm them also as priests. While they stood at the entrance of the tent, with the fire of incense burning in their censers, the LORD again appeared in his glory to the whole congregation of Israel.

[So they all took their censers, and laying incense on the fire they had put in them, they took their stand by the entrance of the meeting tent along with Moses and Aaron. Then, when Korah had assembled all his band against them at the entrance of the meeting tent, the glory of the LORD appeared to the entire community, Num 16,18-19](#)

The LORD was so angry against them, and the whole congregation of the Israelites who were supporting them in their wish, that he wished to destroy the whole congregation. But Moses and Aaron pleaded on behalf of the whole congregation, that they not be slain on the spot. The LORD then warned all to separate themselves from Korah, Dathan and Abiram, lest they be swept away with them because of their sins. And the earth swallowed them up and all that were with them went alive into hell⁵³.

[And they went down alive into hell the ground closing upon them, and they perished from among the people. But all Israel, that was standing round about, fled at the cry of them that were perishing: saying: Lest perhaps the earth swallow us up also. And a fire coming out from the Lord, destroyed the two hundred and fifty men that offered the incense. Num 16,33-35 DRB](#)

The other Levites were still holding the censers of incense burning before the LORD at the entrance of the tent, near the laver and the altar which were also at the entrance. And Fire came out from the LORD and destroyed them for their presumptuous behavior.

⁵² Num 16,3

⁵³ But if the Lord do a new thing, and the earth opening her mouth swallow them down, and all things that belong to them, and they go down alive into hell, you shall know that they have blasphemed the Lord. Num 16,30

If God's punishment was so harsh against those who did not obey his commands concerning the use of the censors, shall it not be even much more severe against those who disobey him concerning baptism? What is more holy than making the oaths of the new covenant in the waters of baptism? And which sacrament of the church compares with the laver, where God forgives the sins of a lifetime and reconciles sinners to himself? Is the church so blind that she cannot see the contempt that the LORD has concerning the presumptuous sins of our fathers, who two hundred years after Christ began baptizing infants? And what about the removing of the laver; who commanded the church to change the way baptism is performed? For almost a thousand years a good portion of the church has ceased baptizing people, making the baptismal lavers no longer necessary.

It is of no real advantage in our age that the LORD is so quiet. His absence from his church is only a proof of his anger towards her disobedience. How many times did the Israelites plan to leave the cloud! Had it not been for God hearing the intercessions of Moses, the LORD would have left them shortly after crossing the Red Sea! If the LORD is to return to his church, then his church needs to rent their hearts that they have continued in the sins of their fathers. For judgment will have to begin in the house of God. And who shall stand when he appears again in his church? For he is like the refiner's fire and will purify those serving him with fire, that their offerings be pleasing before him, as it was in the early church.

When we are baptized and dressed in our priestly clothing, we cannot do anything which the LORD has not commanded us in our service to him. Let us preach the gospel and baptize those who believe, and they will be saved. And in this priestly office, the Lord will confirm us with the signs that follow. Let us lose our lives for the preaching of repentance, and let us baptize those who receive our words, that they might receive the forgiveness of their sins. For in so doing, our lives will serve in the true tent, that the ruins of the laver again be restored.

WATER MIXED WITH THE ASHES OF A RED HEIFER

How many sacrifices did the priest make outside the camp? Was not the altar placed before the entrance to the tent? Why then should the priest ever need to go outside the camp to make an offering?

Yet there was one and only one sacrifice, performed in a very special way, different than any other sacrifice.

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: This is the regulation which the law of the LORD prescribes. Tell the Israelites to procure for you a red heifer that is free from every blemish and defect and on which no yoke has ever been laid. Num 19,1-2

This sacrifice required an animal which was extremely difficult to find. If only a white heifer without any blemishes would be sought, this could be done. But how many red heifers are there, which are not blemished by any other colours? It could have been that this red heifer would not have even been found in certain generations of the children of Israel. The whole nation of Israel was aware of the need for a red heifer, and when one would be found, they would certainly not put a yoke upon it, whereby disqualifying it for this special sacrifice.

This is to be given to Eleazar the priest, to be led outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence. Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood on his finger and sprinkle it seven times toward the front of the meeting tent. Num 19,3-4

The LORD had appointed Eleazar over the whole Dwelling and all the sacred objects and utensils that are in it. He was really at this time the acting High Priest, although officially his very old father still held the title. Shortly thereafter Eleazar would become the next high priest after Aaron.

The LORD chose Eleazar to accompany the red heifer on its way to being sacrificed. Eleazar led the Heifer away from the Dwelling. Continuing, he took it through the camp until he reached the outer edge. Since this was a very rare offering, and a red heifer very rare, the people of the camp would most likely have looked intently at the heifer. Then he left the camp, most likely with a number of spectators. At a special place where there were the dead remains they stop.

After going outside the camp, someone else slaughters the heifer, but in the presence of Eleazar. Why does someone else slaughter the heifer and not the priest? For all other sacrifices require that the priest perform the slaughtering⁵⁴. This sacrifice is different; it shall be done in the presence of the priest, and in the case of Eleazar, the son of the High Priest and the one who will shortly take the place of Aaron.

Although Eleazar did not slaughter the red heifer, he places his hand in some of the blood of the red heifer and turns away from the offering, faces towards the front of the tent. Then he sprinkles in the direction of the whole meeting tent, not just the altar or some part of it, the atoning blood of the heifer.

Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight, with its hide and flesh, its blood and offal; and the priest shall take some cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet yarn and throw them into the fire in which the heifer is being burned. Num 19,5-6

⁵⁴ Lev 1,5; Lev 1,11; Lev 3,2; Lev 3,8; Lev 3,13; Lev 4,4; Lev 4,24; Lev 4,33; Lev 6,18; etc.

During the whole offering, the priest is standing there, watching. This is the only offering where the priest did not remove its hide or cut it in pieces. It is also the only offering which was sacrificed without removing its blood. This is the only sacrifice where the priest receives nothing at all from it, for even with the burnt offering the priest would receive the hide⁵⁵. This is also the only offering where the priest simply watches, while someone else is responsible for slaughtering and burning it.

The Priest throws cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet yarn onto the fire with the offering. Still he continues to watch, for this is to be done in his sight.

'The priest shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward come into the camp, but the priest shall be unclean until evening. Num 19,7 NAS

Once the offering is finished and the red heifer has been burnt to ashes, the priest is unclean. Therefore he must wash his clothes and bathe his body. Then, before evening, he goes into the camp, but is still unclean. At this time he would also have to wash his garments and bathe his body outside the camp. From this time on the priest has nothing more to do with the red heifer.

Usually when the priest came to this clean place outside the camp he was commanded not to wear his priestly garments⁵⁶. By this sacrifice, however, he would be wearing his priestly garments for the duration of the offering.

Likewise, he who burned the heifer shall wash his garments, bathe his body in water, and be unclean until evening. Num 19,8

There was another person with the priest the whole time. He did the dirty work of slaughtering the heifer and burning it. This was not a priest, nor was he mentioned as being clean. There were no rules that this man had even to be a Levite, nor are there any rules preventing this person from being an foreigner dwelling in Israel. This is the only offering where a man, who is not a priest, and has absolutely no qualifications, would be responsible for slaughtering and burning the sacrifice. And because of his part in this offer, he became just as unclean as the priest. Therefore he also had to wash his garments and bathe. Until evening he would remain unclean from the uncleanness coming from burning the offer.

The sin offering was exactly the opposite. Everyone who it would touch the sin offering would become holy⁵⁷. With this offering, and only this offering, everyone involved with it became unclean.

'Now a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place, and the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep it as water to remove impurity; it is purification from sin. Num 19,8 NAS

A third person now comes to help with this special offering. This man is clean, meaning that he most certainly is an Israelite, and living according to the Law of Moses, observing all the laws which are required for a person to be clean. He comes and gathers up the dead heifer, whose

⁵⁵ Lev 7,8 Similarly, the priest who offers a holocaust for someone may keep for himself the hide of the holocaust that he has offered.

⁵⁶ Lev 6,4 Then, having taken off these garments and put on other garments, he shall carry the ashes to a clean place outside the camp.

⁵⁷ Lev 6,11 All the male descendants of Aaron may partake of it as their rightful share in the oblations of the LORD perpetually throughout your generations. Whatever touches the oblations becomes sacred.

remains are now only ashes. He takes these ashes, and does not bring them into the camp, but rather finds another place outside the camp and deposits them there.

This is an offering which purifies from sin. In this water is the blood which is usually poured onto the sides of the altar for atonement. In this water, by virtue of the ashes, is also the cedar wood and the hyssop. In this water is also the body of the red heifer and the scarlet (red) yarn.

[He who has gathered up the ashes of the heifer shall also wash his garments and be unclean until evening. This is a perpetual ordinance, both for the Israelites and for the aliens residing among them. Num 19,10](#)

The man who gathered up the ashes of the heifer is also unclean, but only his garments need washing. For some reason his body does not need to be washed. In some way, this person was not as unclean as the priest and the man who burned the offering.

By this time, the priest is already back in the camp. Most likely the one (or ones) who slaughtered the heifer and burned it in the flames have also returned to the camp. Before the evening he needs to finish gathering the ashes and take them from the place they were burned to another nearby place. And before the evening he needs to wash his garments.

What scene was this law foretelling? What prophetic incident does it foretell⁵⁸? Was it not the scene on the way to and at the cross?^{viii} And is not the red heifer a type for Jesus?

The scene starts at the tent within the camp. The son Eleazar is now the acting High Priest, shortly thereafter to take the place of his father.

[So the band of soldiers, the tribune, and the Jewish guards seized Jesus, bound him, and brought him to Annas first. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. Joh 18,12](#)

At the time of the crucifixion, Annas was very old, yet still high priest⁵⁹. Yet Caiaphas, his son-in-law was the acting High Priest. Annas sends Jesus bound to Caiaphas. Caiaphas, who is the chief priest, accompanies Jesus the rest of the way to his crucifixion, wanting to be sure that nothing might stop his verdict that he should die. Eleazar played the role of Caiaphas.

Jesus, now fully red from the blood of the beatings he has suffered and the thirty nine stripes he bore, is taken by the whole assembly of the Sanhedrin to Pilate⁶⁰. He is being led by Caiaphas, the leader of the Sanhedrin, who, like Eleazar, will shortly take the place of his father. The red heifer played the role of Jesus.

The group of the Sanhedrin is referred to by all four gospels as the 'chief priests'.

The chief priests accused Jesus harshly before Pilate. However, Pilate refused to give him the death sentence. Then they began crying out, 'Crucify him'. Pilate asked, 'Why? What evil has he done?' As he saw that he was not succeeding at all, but that a riot was about to break out, he took water and washed his hands in the sight of the crowd, saying 'I am innocent of this man's blood.'

⁵⁸ All the prophets and the law prophesied up to the time of John.

⁵⁹ Joh 18,22-24 When he had said this, one of the temple guards standing there struck Jesus and said, "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. (Ananias is mentioned here and at Joh 18,19 as the high priest)

⁶⁰ Lk 22,70-23-1 They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth." Then the whole assembly of them arose and brought him before Pilate.

At this, the whole crowd began shouting in reply, 'His blood be upon us and upon our children'. Did only one voice cry these words? No, the whole crowd was crying out, that his blood would be upon them and their children. Stirred up by the chief priests, the voice of the high priest was most assuredly repeating these words with the crowd, maybe even as many as seven times. The sprinkling of the blood towards the tent played the role of chief priests crying out, 'His blood be upon us and upon our children'.

Was not the blood of the red heifer sprinkled seven times for the atonement of the whole meeting tent? And was it not God's purpose that his blood be for the atonement of them and their children for all generations? Did not a large number of these same people receive the atonement just fifty days later on the day of Pentecost? Was it not through this atoning blood that the church, the eternal Dwelling, was raised up just weeks later?

After the chief priests accused him harshly to Pilate, they received what they wanted, the wooden cross, foretold by the cedar wood. The cedar wood had now been added by the priest to the sacrificial fire.

Pilate wanted to have nothing to do with this innocent man. However, upon the demand of the chief priests, he was bitterly scourged. His back was ripped open with scourging and the soldiers of Pilate crowned him with thorns and beat upon his crown with his scepter, hailing him as King of the Jews. The bitter hyssop had also been thrown onto the sacrificial fire by the priest.

He was pierced for our offenses and crushed for our sins. Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed. The chief priests delivered Jesus to Pilate, that he might be crucified. Although Pilate and the roman soldiers kept the fire of suffering going until the sacrifice was complete, it was the chief priests who through the scarlet yarn into the fire. It was in accordance to their wish that the atonement sacrifice was carried out. As he was being whipped the first part of the scarlet yarn had been thrown onto the sacrificial fire by the priest.

Outside the city Jesus was brought to a place where others very likely had already been crucified. This place was known as the place of the skull, or Golgotha in Greek. The leading of the red heifer to the place of dead remains to be sacrificed foretold Jesus being brought to Golgotha to be crucified.

The four soldiers took his hands and feet and nailed them onto the cross.⁶¹ They were to remain at the scene of the crucifixion the whole time, making sure the fire of suffering and mockery doesn't go out. Nobody would be permitted to try to take his body down from the cross; they were specifically given the charge to have him crucified and to wait there until he was dead. The man or men who slaughtered the red heifer and were responsible for keeping the fire burning until only ashes remained foretold the role the soldiers played in conducting the crucifixion.

Jesus was slain by the soldiers. This happened in the presence of the chief priests, but the chief priests did not have an active part in it. The slaying of the red heifer in the presence of Eleazar foretold Jesus being slain by the soldiers in the presence of the chief priests.

During the whole crucifixion the chief priests were watching, often making remarks, happy to aid the soldiers in keeping the fire burning. Jesus was slain in their sight and they stayed there

⁶¹ Joh 19,23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down.

until the sacrifice was complete. The burning of the sacrifice of the red heifer in the sight of Eleazar foretold the suffering and death of Jesus happening in the sight of the chief priests.

Likewise the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him and said, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. So he is the king of Israel! Let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. Mt 27,41-42

As the sacrifice came to an end, Jesus cried out, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?' The high priest Caiaphas had prophesied just days earlier:

All of you know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. Joh 11,49b-50 UKJV

And in accordance to the Word of the LORD spoken by Caiaphas the high priest, the LORD laid upon him the iniquity of us all. The scarlet yarn burnt with the red heifer, thrown in the fire by Eleazar, foretold the invaluable role that Caiaphas played in having Jesus be put to death for the people. With his help as high priest was God the Father able to lay upon Jesus the sins and guilt of the world. In this way Caiaphas threw into the sacrifice the scarlet yarn⁶², whereby the atonement for sins was accomplished.

The first to leave the sacrifice of the red heifer was Eleazar. He was to return to the camp, where he would remain until evening. And so the chief priests left as soon as the suffering of Jesus had come to an end and he was dead. The returning of Eleazar to the camp before the others foretold the chief priests as being the first of the three groups of people to return to Jerusalem.

Before evening the one responsible for sacrificing the red heifer also returned to the camp. Shortly before sundown, after Jesus was already dead, the chief priests had already entered the camp and went to Pilate, that he remove his body from the cross before the Passover feast begins. He commanded the soldiers to finish their work before sundown. So the soldiers then made sure that Jesus was dead, piercing his side with a sword. As water and blood came forth, the atonement on the cross was complete. The returning of the man who burnt the wood showed the role of the soldiers, that they returned to Jerusalem before sundown.

There was no requirement that the man who would slay and burn the red heifer be clean. The man foretold the soldiers at the crucifixion. Those who crucified Jesus were not priests, nor were they clean.

Although the soldiers killed Jesus, they did not remove his body from the cross. Joseph of Arimathea came to Pilate and asked if he could remove the body of Jesus.

Joseph of Arimathea, a distinguished member of the council, who was himself awaiting the kingdom of God, came and courageously went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was amazed that he was already dead. He summoned the centurion and asked him if Jesus had already died. And when he learned of it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. Mk 15,43-45

Joseph hurried through the streets of Jerusalem, buying a linen cloth⁶³ as he was going. Arriving at Golgotha he met Nicodemus, who also was there to help gather up the ashes. He had a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes for the burial⁶⁴. They removed the dead carcass, wrapped it in linen, and carried it to a nearby garden tomb.⁶⁵ Both Joseph and Nicodemus were devout Jews and followed carefully the laws for remaining clean. For them it was important that Jesus be removed from the cross before sunset, otherwise his death would make the land unclean.

If a man does a crime for which the punishment is death, and he is put to death by hanging him on a tree; Do not let his body be on the tree all night, but put it to rest in the earth the same day; for the man who undergoes hanging is cursed by God; so do not make unclean the land which the Lord your God is giving you for your heritage. Deut 21,22-23 BBE

The clean man who gathered up the remains and deposited them in a clean place was fulfilled as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took up the remains of Jesus' carcass and laid it in the tomb.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were not as unclean in the crucifixion as the high priest or the soldiers. Still, however, because he touched the body of a dead person, he would be unclean for seven days and had to be washed by the lustral water. But he did not have the type of uncleanness of the priest. The requirement that the one who gathers the remains only needs to wash his garments, not his body, foretold the lesser degree of uncleanness that Joseph and Nicodemus had in comparison to the chief priests and the soldiers.

How was this lustral water to be used?

Whoever touches the dead body of any human being shall be unclean for seven days; he shall purify himself with the water on the third and on the seventh day, and then he will be clean again. But if he fails to purify himself on the third and on the seventh day, he will not become clean. Everyone who fails to purify himself after touching the body of any deceased person, defiles the Dwelling of the LORD and shall be cut off from Israel. Since the lustral water has not been splashed over him, he remains unclean: his uncleanness still clings to him. Num 19,11-13

The lustral water is the only way a person who had touched a dead person could be cleansed. Under normal conditions, if a man becomes unclean by touching a dead person, he will remain unclean for an unlimited amount of time. However, with the lustral water, his uncleanness will last only seven days. On the third day the lustral water must be splashed over him, and also on the seventh day.

Why does the unclean person not be immediately cleansed? Why does he have to wait until the third day? This is foretelling of the justification from sin which happened on the third day, as Jesus rose from death.

In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not administered by hand, by stripping off the carnal body, with the circumcision of Christ. You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

⁶³ Mk 15,45-46 And when he learned of it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. Having bought a linen cloth, he took him down, wrapped him in the linen cloth and laid him in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb.

⁶⁴ Joh 19,39 Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds.

⁶⁵ Joh 19,41-42 Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by.

And even when you were dead (in) transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he brought you to life along with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions Col 2,11-13

We were dead in our sins and transgressions. Our carnal body, the body of death, was stripped of us like the stripping off of the foreskin in circumcision. This happened to us as we received the circumcision of Christ.

The gospel is the message of the death of Jesus for us. When we believe is good news, which proclaims that Jesus died for our sins, we are baptized. By believing⁶⁶ on his death for us we are baptized^{ix}. It is in the water that we are to receive that for which Jesus was crucified. And when we were baptized we were raised with him as we put our trust in God, believing that he was capable of doing this for us.

Just as God raised Jesus from the dead, we are also raised with him in baptism. This is how the uncleanness of death is removed. We were dead in our transgressions and our flesh was uncircumcised, i.e. completely unclean having on it the stench of death itself. In baptism, because we partake in his resurrection, we are brought to life with him. And in baptism he has forgiven us of all our transgressions.

Partaking through our baptism in his resurrection, we also are raised with him on the third day.

He will revive us after two days; on the third day he will raise us up, to live in his presence. Let us know, let us strive to know the LORD; as certain as the dawn is his coming, and his judgment shines forth like the light of day! He will come to us like the rain, like spring rain that waters the earth. Hos 6,2-3

Jesus had been handed over for our transgressions, but he was raised from death for our justification, that we might live new lives free from sin.⁶⁷ And in this context, we who were dead in our sins received the lustral water on the third day. In our new lives, we strive in knowing the LORD, certain of his coming and now looking forward to the Day of Judgment, confident of the reward we will receive. We live for the sake of his rain watering the earth, where his Spirit makes alive the dead through the preaching of the gospel.⁶⁸

The uncleanness of death lasted seven days.

Moreover, everyone who in the open country touches a dead person, whether he was slain by the sword or died naturally, or who touches a human bone or a grave, shall be unclean for seven days. Num 19,16

After becoming unclean, until the third day we are not to receive the lustral water. The lustral water has no effect before the third day. Until the third day after the death of Jesus, he was not seen by anyone. As he foretold with his own words, he was in the heart of the earth, in hell⁶⁹.

⁶⁶ Acts 8,36-37 As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." NAS

⁶⁷ Rom 4,23-25 But it was not for him alone that it was written that "it was credited to him"; it was also for us, to whom it will be credited, who believe in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over for our transgressions and was raised for our justification.

⁶⁸ Rev 22,17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let the hearer say, "Come." Let the one who thirsts come forward, and the one who wants it receive the gift of life-giving water.

⁶⁹ Mt 12,40 Just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.

He was there, not because of his sins, but because of ours. We deserved this punishment, but he bore it on our place. If we had died without receiving the lustral water, we would have remained there forever. However, because he was without sin, and the Son of God, death and hell could not keep him. He triumphed over death and took into his hands the keys of hell and death. And on the third day he rose out of hell; death had been conquered!

[Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Col 2,14-15 KJV](#)

When we are baptized all of the handwriting of our transgressions, which would normally condemn us to eternal fire, are taken from the books of judgment and nailed to the cross. They are in this way disposed of, taken out of the sight of the Lord. Those who died before Christ's resurrection, yet who in their lives had received the mark of justification through their faith, they also partook of his triumph and rose with him as the powers of darkness were taken captive and their spoils freed. They all rose with him the third day, even as we rose with him through baptism on the third day.

[For anyone who is thus unclean, ashes from the sin offering shall be put in a vessel, and spring water shall be poured on them. Then a man who is clean shall take some hyssop, dip it in this water, and sprinkle it on the tent and on all the vessels and persons that were in it, or on him who touched a bone, a slain person or other dead body, or a grave. Num 19,17-18](#)

Why does the lustral water have this ability to cleanse from death? The lustral water at first has not purifying ability, but is simply normal running water. As soon as the lustral water is poured over the ashes it is then capable of purifying from sin and cleansing from death. In the lustral water are thereby the remains from the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet yarn and the offering of the red heifer, both the body and the blood. And these, because they foretold the crucifixion of the Messiah for atonement, cleansed from death. For this reason, the LORD said of this offering, [it is purification from sin.](#)

Why does the water of baptism have the ability to cleanse us from sins? In the water of the covenant of baptism we find the different objects of the crucifixion^x. We also find the sacrificial offering of Jesus, both his body and his blood. In baptism we are crucified with Christ, the handwriting against us being nailed to the cross. We are buried with him into his death. In a real sense, we receive in baptism what we believed in the preaching of the gospel. We preach the crucifixion of Christ and those who believe us are baptized and receive the benefit of his crucifixion. Our old man, the body of sin, is put away in baptism as we are united with Christ's body in his death. We receive through the virtue of his blood the forgiveness of our sins. We benefit also from his bitter suffering on the tree, whereby the curse leaves us. He became a curse for us, that we might receive the blessing of Abraham. Through the stripes he bore in his bitter suffering we are healed. The scarlet yarn burned in the fire, and our sins and guilt, which were as scarlet, were paid for in this sacrifice. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins from us.

[And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even. Num 19,19 KJV](#)

Who then is this clean man who sprinkles the unclean on the third and seventh day? Is it not the ministers of the Gospel? Jesus said to his disciples, He who receives you receives me. Those who receive the disciples of Jesus are baptized, for Jesus commanded them to preach the gospel to all people; saying that those who believe and are baptized shall be saved.

Do not the ministers of the Gospel proclaim the necessity of being baptized? And is it not through them that people enter through baptism the gates of the church? And the unclean are thereby made clean by the water which purifies from sin.

The last part of the cleansing happens on the seventh day. On this day he first is sprinkled with the water which purifies from sin. The unclean person washes his clothing and bathes himself in water. This is the same cleansing requirement for the priest and the one who burnt the red heifer. And like the priest, he remains unclean until evening. On the eighth day, which starts at the setting of the sun, the person is from then on clean. Just as the circumcision removed the reproach of Egypt from the children of Israel, so is the reproach of the world, by which we have become unclean in the sight of God, removed from us as we are baptized.

[Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have removed the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the place is called Gilgal to the present day. Josh 5,9](#)

As circumcision takes place on the eighth day, so it is that we are justified in God's sight⁷⁰ by being united in Christ's resurrection⁷¹, which took place on the eighth day.

[Everyone who fails to purify himself after touching the body of any deceased person, defiles the Dwelling of the LORD and shall be cut off from Israel. Since the lustral water has not been splashed over him, he remains unclean: his uncleanness still clings to him. Num 19,13](#)

The command concerning the necessity of being purified is the same as the command concerning the necessity of being circumcised. Whoever refuses to be cleansed shall be cut off from God's community. Is this not reflecting God's decision that only those who are baptized belong to his church? Although many who are not baptized may visit the community, the church, yet to belong to the eternal, heavenly church you must be baptized. At the very latest, at the day of Eternal Judgment, those who refused to enter this covenant shall be cut off. For without this cleansing they would defile his sanctuary. As long as the person is not baptized, no matter how given he may be to God or his work, he remains unclean. His uncleanness still clings to him.

To express the importance of these words, the LORD spoke them twice.

[Any unclean man who fails to have himself purified shall be cut off from the community, because he defiles the sanctuary of the LORD. As long as the lustral water has not been splashed over him, he remains unclean. Num 19,20](#)

The LORD speaks about this uncleanness then a third time, warning the whole congregation concerning their uncleanness. If they refuse to be cleansed by the water, whoever is influenced by them will also become unclean.

[And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth him shall be unclean until even. Num 19,21 Jewish Publication Society](#)

⁷⁰ After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Hos 6,2 KJV

⁷¹ Rom 4,25 who was handed over for our transgressions and was raised for our justification.

For those who would not reverence this command and thereby come in contact with this water inadvertently, the LORD also made a command:

This shall be a perpetual ordinance for you. "One who sprinkles the lustral water shall wash his garments, and anyone who comes in contact with this water shall be unclean until evening. Num 19,21

The one who baptized, because of the holiness of this rite, needs to wash his garments by living a pure, righteous life. But the one who comes in contact with the water inadvertently becomes unclean. That same water which made the one person clean makes those who do not properly reverence the rite of baptism unclean.

Is this not what happened in the house of the prophet Elisha? Because the servant Gehazi sought personal advantage from the cleansing of the leper Naaman, the leprosy, from which Naaman had been cleansed by in the water of the Jordan, came upon Gehazi and his descendants. Because he did not show proper reverence, the cleansing of Naaman brought to him and his descendants an uncleanness which cleaved to their flesh.

The leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever." And Gehazi left Elisha, a leper white as snow. 2Kgs 5,27

Did not Paul refer to the ashes of the red heifer as cleansing those whose flesh is defiled? And then did he not refer to the blood of Christ offered by the eternal spirit as having done the more perfect work, not the shadow of things to come, but that for which the shadows were made?

For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes can sanctify those who are defiled so that their flesh is cleansed, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God. Hebr 9,13-14

THANKSGIVING OFFERING EATEN BY THE UNCLEAN

What is the offering of Thanksgiving? Is it not a very special offering, where the peace sacrifice is done with the intension of thanking the LORD? This is a peace offering together with Not only is a sheep sacrificed, but also unleavened bread and unleavened cakes belong to this offering.

The blood of the sheep is splashed upon the foot of the altar for atonement and the flesh and the unleavened bread is eaten by anyone who is clean. With the peace offering, it must be eaten within two days and all that remains must be burnt on the third day.

When anyone makes a peace offering in thanksgiving, together with his thanksgiving sacrifice he shall offer unleavened cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes made of fine flour mixed with oil and well kneaded. His offering shall also include loaves of leavened bread along with the victim of his peace offering for thanksgiving. Lev 7,12-13

With thanksgiving to the LORD, eating of this offering and of this bread wins the favor of the LORD. However, if celebrated wrongly, it is as refuse and brings judgment on any who eat of it.

If, therefore, any of the flesh of the peace offering is eaten on the third day, it shall not win favor for him nor shall it be reckoned to his credit; rather, it shall be considered as refuse, and anyone who eats of it shall have his guilt to bear. Should the flesh touch anything unclean, it may not be eaten, but shall be burned up in the fire. All who are clean may partake of this flesh. If, however, someone while in a state of uncleanness eats any of the flesh of a peace offering belonging to the LORD, that person shall be cut off from his people. Lev 7,18-20

Could it be that these three days foretold the time in which Jesus was dead? And is not this celebration similar to us celebrating the Eucharist, which is the offering of thanksgiving of the church? For the two days after Jesus was sacrificed for atonement, he was dead. But on the third day he rose from the dead. When we partake of the Eucharist, we partake of the death of the LORD.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes. 1.Cor 11,26

Jesus was only dead two days. When we partake of his death in the Eucharist, we partake of his body, which died for us. But on the third day he was no longer dead, but alive, risen from the dead.

There were two classes of people who were unclean. First, all who were not circumcised were unclean and could not partake in any sacrifices, nor of the Passover. And in this very way, all who are not baptized should not partake in the thanksgiving offering. The others who were unclean were circumcised, but because of some reason had become unclean.

If anyone were to partake of the thanksgiving offering that was not clean, this person would be cut off from his people.

Why was the penalty so great? How could that which normally brings the favor of the LORD become the exact opposite if those partaking of it did not observe the rules of the thanksgiving offering? Is it not because of the holiness which the LORD saw in the death of his Son? Is it not understandable of God's wrath against those who partook of it unworthily? The LORD wishes

that we partake of his Son's body with thankfulness in our hearts, thankfulness for the atonement we received through his body being sacrificed for us and his blood being sprinkled on the altar. But our celebration will not bring favor if we do not observe the rules concerning this offering of thanks. Only those belonging to the new circumcision shall partake of it. Those who were baptized as infants, if they wish to partake of it and truly wish to be disciples, then they must first be obedient to the LORD in baptism and then they can partake of the thanksgiving offering. Those who never entered the baptismal laver, but only had water poured over their head or were only sprinkled, let them first be obedient to the Lord who was sacrificed for them. Let them enter the new covenant by entering the laver and being dipped in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son and in the name of the Holy Spirit. Then, having been obedient to the teaching of Jesus and the apostles, let them partake in a worthy manner of his body and blood.

If there are others, who have been baptized, yet who have not forgiven someone, let them know that their sins will also not be forgiven. They too are not worthy of drinking of the cup. For if we do not forgive others, neither will our Father forgive us our sins. If there are any who have had sexual intercourse, and yet are not married, unless they have confessed these sins and sincerely repented, they are not invited to this holy sacrifice. With many other sins which have been committed, it is of utmost importance that we judge ourselves before taking of the blood and body of Jesus. If we fail to do observe these things, our thanksgiving offerings will bring God's judgment and it would have been far better for us, if we had abstained from this celebration.

[Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are ill and infirm, and a considerable number are dying. If we discerned ourselves, we would not be under judgment; but since we are judged by \(the\) Lord, we are being disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. 1.Cor 11,27-32](#)

What does it mean, to have to give an answer for eating the body and blood of the Lord unworthily? Does not this speak of the Day of Judgment, where we will have to give an answer for not having observed his ordinance concerning partaking of his Son's death? Is this not especially dangerous, considering that many think they receive favor of the Lord by taking communion, yet are totally unaware that because they have not observed his ordinances they will be judged? Who of us wants to have to answer to the Lord for having partaken in this celebration unworthily? Yet what could cause God's anger to rise more than celebrating this offering of thanksgiving for Christ's sacrifice together with the unclean?

[Likewise, if someone touches anything unclean, whether the uncleanness be of human or of animal origin or from some loathsome crawling creature, and then eats of a peace offering belonging to the LORD, that person, too, shall be cut off from his people. Lev 7,21](#)

THE LAW OF ATONEMENT

What does it mean to approach the presence of the LORD? Is not the Almighty God holy? How foolish it is for men to approach him, when they themselves are not holy and obedient to his words? After killing the two sons of Aaron, Moses warned Aaron about being careful not to enter the holy place, lest he die. There was only one single day of the year on which God would accept him in this room, and only if he would observe certain ordinances, otherwise he would die. And nobody except the High Priest was permitted to enter this holy place, otherwise he also would die.

Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they had approached the presence of the LORD and died. The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, or he will die; for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat.

The two sons of Aaron had just been buried.

"Aaron shall enter the holy place with this: with a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash and attired with the linen turban (these are holy garments). Then he shall bathe his body in water and put them on. Lev 16,1-4 NAS

Before putting on his holy garments, Aaron would enter the laver and bathe his whole body. He would not just put water on his head or his hands, but his whole body would be bathed in the laver. Then he was clean and could put on the holy garments.

If Aaron had failed to obey this ordinance, he would have died before the LORD over mercy seat, as his two sons had died. Aaron knew the importance of obeying the ordinances of the LORD, and for this reason he could enter the tent below the cloud. And when he entered that special room where the mercy seat was, the fiery pillar of cloud was also in a very unique way visible over the mercy seat. Most of the words the LORD spoke in the book of Leviticus were spoken directly from the cloud above the mercy seat. And to approach this seat without being cleansed by the water of the laver, or to approach this seat without the burnt offering and the sin offering, would have brought certain death. The burnt offering of the ram would bring atonement, not for his sins, but for the sins of the people. But first, he sacrificed the bull for his sins and the sins of his family.

Who of us wants to stand before the presence of the LORD without first having been bathed in the laver? What will happen to those who are not wearing the priestly garments received as we are clothed with Christ in baptism? What if we did not live for the gospel, bringing with us the spiritual sacrifice by which the sins of others had been forgiven? Each of us has a very special appointment with the Holy, Almighty God. Should we not come to this appointment prepared, and regard this appointment as the most important appointment of our lives?

But when the king came in to meet the guests he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment. He said to him, 'My friend, how is it that you came in here without a wedding garment?' But he was reduced to silence. Then the king said to his attendants, 'Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.' Many are invited, but few are chosen." Mt 22,11-14

THE CROSSING OF THE JORDAN

Moses was one hundred and twenty years old⁷² as he was gathered to his kindred. Joshua, who loved the LORD and loved being in his presence⁷³, received from the LORD the leadership of the Israelites.

After Moses, the servant of the LORD, had died, the LORD said to Moses' aide Joshua, son of Nun: My servant Moses is dead. So prepare to cross the Jordan here, with all the people into the land I will give the Israelites. Josh 1,1-2

The first command on Joshua from the LORD was to prepare to cross the Jordan. What did the LORD mean, when he commanded Joshua to prepare to cross the Jordan? What should Joshua do, to prepare to cross the Jordan? And how can we prepare to be baptized? Just as with Joshua, the first command that a disciple of Jesus is given from the LORD is to prepare to be baptized.

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself was not baptizing, just his disciples) Joh 4,1-2

Very many people were going to Jesus to become his disciples. Jesus was baptizing on the Jordan, not far from where John was baptizing. Just months earlier, everyone was going to John to be baptized. A few of these people became disciples of John, but most of them came to John, not because they wanted to be his disciples, but because they wanted to repent of their sins and be cleansed.

With Jesus it was different. Jesus saw baptism as the first step to becoming his disciple. John prepared the people for Jesus, he called them to repentance. If any of those who had repented and had been baptized by John wanted to become a disciple of Jesus, they had to be baptized again.⁷⁴ The baptism of Jesus was based on the oath of discipleship, while the baptism of John simply required that you confessed your sins and repented. Those who were baptized by Jesus became his disciples, where he was their Lord, their master.

We prepare ourselves for crossing the Jordan when we make the necessary preparation in our lives to repent. For those who like sin and do not want to leave the darkness, they are not permitted to cross the Jordan. They must remain in the wilderness like the generation who left Egypt with Moses. The only two who crossed the Jordan were Joshua and Caleb, because they loved the LORD and wished to follow him with all their hearts. Those whose hearts were hard and did not repent died in the wilderness.

His message of repentance was to prepare them for the Messiah, who was to follow. John was sent to turn the hearts of the people. John was that the messenger who was to proceed the LORD, as he was about to enter his temple.

Lo, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me; And suddenly there will come to the temple the LORD whom you seek, And the messenger of the covenant whom you desire. Yes, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who will endure the day of his coming? And who can

⁷² Deut 34,7 Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were undimmed and his vigor unabated.

⁷³ Ex 33,11 And the LORD spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he would return into the camp; but his minister Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tent.

⁷⁴ Act 19,3-5 He said, "How were you baptized?" They replied, "With the baptism of John." Paul then said, "John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

stand when he appears? For he is like the refiner's fire, or like the fuller's lye. He will sit refining and purifying (silver), and he will purify the sons of Levi, Refining them like gold or like silver that they may offer due sacrifice to the LORD. Mal 3,1-3

After hundreds of years of silence, the LORD was to suddenly appear in his temple. Wanting to prevent the judgment against all who would not receive him, which would cause the land being doomed, he sent his messenger before him to prepare his way. The LORD was to purify the Sons of Levi, but this purification would be a very hot fire. Who would be able to endure the day of his coming?

If we become his disciples, we must also bear the refiner's flame. And so John came so that the Messiah would be known to Israel. Andrew, the brother of Peter, had been prepared for him. Also Nathaniel (Bartholomew) and Philip had been prepared by John for the Messiah. And John told them all, that Jesus was the Messiah.

One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). John 1,40-41

Another way we prepare to cross the Jordan is by believing the testimony that God gives of his Son, that Jesus is the Messiah. Believing this is not passive. Rather, if we truly believe in our hearts that he is the Messiah, then we will automatically believe the words he speaks. Today it is not possible to hear Andrew coming to us and saying, 'We have found the Messiah'. The disciples of Jesus are now in Heaven, they are no longer on this earth. But they have written their testimony down, that you might believe on the Messiah and have eternal life.

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of (his) disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may (come to) believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name. Joh 20,30-31

Joshua (Jesus) was only able to lead the children of Israel to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land because they believed the LORD. The generation who had left Egypt did not trust the LORD, but hardened their hearts in disbelief. And for this very reason they could not enter what God had promised them. They all died without crossing the Jordan and their bodies were all buried in the wilderness.

For in fact we have received the good news just as they did. But the word that they heard did not profit them, for they were not united in faith with those who listened. Hebr 4,2

Baptism is no different than putting a dog underneath the water for those who do not believe that Jesus is the Messiah and who do not wish to be his whole hearted disciples. They will be no different when they come out of the water than when they went in. For this reason, the LORD has ordained that only those who believe shall cross the Jordan. Did not Peter require of those baptized on Pentecost that they believe on Jesus as the Messiah? Only those who received his words were baptized! And was it not the same with Phillip, as he spoke to the Eunuch in the chariot of the death of Jesus, the Messiah?

As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" Act 8,36 NAS

After hearing the gospel from Philip, after hearing about the Messiah, after hearing about the testimony of John and repentance, after hearing about Jesus being crucified and rising from death, after hearing about baptism he asked Philip, 'What is to prevent my being baptized?'

His question made clear to Philip that the Eunuch wanted to receive the riches of eternal life, the pearl of great price. He wanted to repent, he was ready to be a disciple of Jesus. So Philip told him the answer to his question.

[And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Act 8,37 NAS](#)

Did not Paul require the same of those who heard his preaching of the Gospel? Can you name a single exception, where someone who didn't believe the gospel was baptized?

If someone today wishes to be baptized, to cross the Jordan, then he must be prepared, he must believe with all his heart.

[So Joshua commanded the officers of the people: "Go through the camp and instruct the people, 'Prepare your provisions, for three days from now you shall cross the Jordan here, to march in and take possession of the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you.'" Josh 1,10-11](#)

Before they crossed the Jordan they made all of the necessary preparations. No longer were the children of Israel disbelieving. They did not simply sit there in disbelief, murmuring against Joshua as they did against Moses. The generation at the time of Moses most likely wouldn't have prepared, they would have questioned Joshua, 'How shall we enter the land with all of our provisions? We have no boats and the Jordan River is deep?' Only after seeing the waters depart, as at the shores of the Red Sea, would they believe. They may have said, 'Let us wait these three days and see if the waters part. Then we will prepare our provisions, otherwise we may be wasting our time'.

The children of the disobedient generation who died in the wilderness had learned to believe and had learned also to obey. What was their answer to Joshua?

["We will do all you have commanded us," they answered Joshua, "and we will go wherever you send us. We will obey you as completely as we obeyed Moses. But may the LORD, your God, be with you as he was with Moses. If anyone rebels against your orders and does not obey every command you give him, he shall be put to death. But be firm and steadfast." Josh 1,16-18](#)

If we wish to cross the Jordan, we must be willing to obey Jesus and go wherever he sends us. We must obey him completely; he must be in all truth the Lord of our lives. If anyone rebels and does not do what the Lord commands, then it is better that this person does not cross the Jordan.

Joshua had given his first command to the people of Israel, 'Prepare to cross the Jordan in three days'. Believing Joshua, they did as he said and prepared their provisions. Those who believe the disciples of Jesus preaching the gospel, they also make the practical considerations of leaving their old lives behind, of repenting, of leaving the darkness of lies and seduction, and entering the kingdom of God.

A few days earlier he sent out secretly two spies to Jericho, who returned three days later⁷⁵. They arrived at the house of Rehab and heard of her faith, that they would shortly destroy Jericho. And because of her faith, she pleaded with them that she and her house would be spared. And in accordance to her wish, she put a scarlet cord⁷⁶ outside the window on the wall of the city, marking her house. Is not this scarlet cord similar to the scarlet cord thrown into the fire of the red heifer? Were not the sins of this harlot as scarlet, yet because of her believing they would be white as snow?

After three days⁷⁷ they then arrived back to the camp, the day before Joshua gave the command to prepare to cross the Jordan. How very important is faith for preparing to cross the Jordan!

Then the two men returned and came down from the hill country and crossed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and they related to him all that had happened to them. They said to Joshua, "Surely the LORD has given all the land into our hands; moreover, all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before us." Josh 2,23-24

After hearing this report, all of the people of Israel were filled with confidence in the LORD. And sometimes, before we cross the Jordan, the Lord gives us a very special encouragement and confidence, that we will overcome all of the giants and the fortified cities of the enemy on the other side of the Jordan.

Early the next morning, Joshua moved with all the Israelites from Shittim to the Jordan, where they lodged before crossing over. Three days later the officers went through the camp... Josh 3,1-2a

After hearing this report, all the Israelites moved to the banks of the Jordan. Just as Joshua had told them, they knew in three days they would be crossing the Jordan. They were not afraid of the giants or the fortified cities, as their parents had been. They believed the LORD, and through the virtue of true faith, they obeyed him.

Three days later the officers went through the camp and issued these instructions to the people: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD, your God, which the levitical priests will carry, you must also break camp and follow it, that you may know the way to take, for you have not gone over this road before. But let there be a space of two thousand cubits between you and the ark. Do not come nearer to it."

The officers went throughout the camp and proclaimed a message concerning the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant is the place where the atoning sacrifice takes place once a year. When in the LORD's sanctuary, nobody was permitted to see it except the high priest. But on this very special day, the day they were to cross the Jordan, everyone was going to see it. Not only were they going to see it, but they were commanded to follow it!

What was more holy in the sanctuary than the Ark of the Covenant? Was it not for this reason that the veil separated it from the rest of the tabernacle as the holy of holies? And wasn't the holiness of the ark based upon the mercy seat, where the atoning sacrifice was made once a year by the high priest? Was it not at this very same bank of the Jordan, where John cried out

⁷⁵ Josh 2,16 "Go up into the hill country," she suggested to them, "that your pursuers may not find you. Hide there for three days, until they return; then you may proceed on your way."

⁷⁶ Josh 2,21 She said, "According to your words, so be it." So she sent them away, and they departed; and she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

⁷⁷ Josh 2,22a They departed and came to the hill country, and remained there for three days until the pursuers returned.

concerning Jesus, 'Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!?' Did not John's disciples Andrew and Philip obey the voice in the wilderness at the shore of the Jordan as they became disciples of Jesus?

Joshua also said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will perform wonders among you." Josh 3,5

The last step of preparation was to now take place. If there was any sin of any type in their lives, now was the time to get rid of it. No idols were to enter the water, no sexual uncleanness, no lies, no hatred, but rather forgiveness. Before the LORD would do this very great wonder, they were to sanctify themselves. The time had come for them to inherit a land flowing with milk and honey, the land the LORD had promised to Abraham six hundred and eighty five years earlier.

And he directed the priests to take up the Ark of the Covenant and go on ahead of the people; and they did so. Josh 3,6

Just as the officers were commanded by Jesus (Joshua) to proclaim to the Israelites to look to the ark, so we are commanded by Jesus to proclaim to the whole world the atoning sacrifice of his Son. And just as those who believed the officers followed the ark and were led into the waters of the Jordan, so are those who believe us concerning the atoning sacrifice of Jesus lead into the water of baptism.

Now command the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant to come to a halt in the Jordan when they reach the edge of the waters." So Joshua said to the Israelites, "Come here and listen to the words of the LORD, your God." He continued: "This is how you will know that there is a living God in your midst, who at your approach will dispossess the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. The ark of the covenant of the LORD of the whole earth will precede you into the Jordan. Josh 3,8-11

The Israelites were to wait at the edge of the waters and Joshua spoke to them of the covenant that God made with them. The covenant he made with them was that they would be his people, he would give them the land of Israel to live in and he would be in their midst. So these words of the covenant were spoken to them on this bank. Their faith had led them to this water, and because of their faith the LORD reckoned them worthy of receiving this promise.

When we believe on his death, as presented to us by the gospel, we also hear by the waters the words of the covenant which God made through his son Jesus. Just as the LORD promised Abraham, 'To your descendants I will give this land' he also promised him another people of covenant, not by virtue of natural birth, but by a spiritual birth, having that same faith of Abraham. Did not the LORD promise Abraham at the site where the Messiah would one day be sacrificed, and this time with an oath, two covenant people?

'By Myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast hearkened to My voice.' Gen 22,18 Jewish Publication Society

Abraham is the father of a great people, the only nation upon this earth which he chose for himself. And to this nation is also given the promises for all times, that the Messiah will rule from here all nations. Also this nation will be in the latter days the glorious crown of the second

people, as foretold in Isaiah, Zechariah and many of the other prophets. This second people are those of all nations who through his seed (singular), that is Jesus, the Messiah, have received the blessing of Abraham. The LORD bestowed this blessing upon Abraham because of his faith.

In his obedience he offering up his Son Isaac as a foreshadow of Jesus, the Son of God, on that same mountain where God knew his own Son would one day be offered as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. For it was on this mount that the blessing for all nations was provided for, purchased by the blood of Jesus. This is the mount which the LORD led Abraham to, taking three days, in the land of Moriah, where Jerusalem is today. And Abraham named this special mount, 'The LORD Will Provide', for on this mount the LORD provided the sacrifice by which the people of all nations enter the eternal covenant.

And on the side of the waters we hear the words of this eternal covenant. It is for the forgiveness of our sins that we have approached the water, to receive the atoning sacrifice provided for us on the mount. And it is also for a love relationship, that Jesus be LORD of our lives and we be his disciples. The LORD makes his oath to us as God's word is spoken. This time, however, this oath is spoken to us personally; 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow'. And we make our oath to him, personally. Having repented from our sins and renounced the devil, we say, 'As for me and my house, we shall serve the LORD' and personally to Jesus, 'My Lord and my God'. Following the oaths of the covenant we cross the Jordan.

[When the soles of the feet of the priests carrying the ark of the LORD, the Lord of the whole earth, touch the water of the Jordan, it will cease to flow; for the water flowing down from upstream will halt in a solid bank. Josh 3,13](#)

Just as the Red Sea parted with the water on both sides being a solid bank, so could the children of Israel see again this solid bank of water as they crossed the Jordan. By the crossing of the Red Sea they were saved from their enemies, the Egyptians. By the crossing of the Jordan they entered into the Promised Land, the land of their future for them and their descendants as long as the earth remains.

[Just as the ark was the place where the atoning sacrifice was made for the people of the first covenant, so is the cross of Jesus for those of the new covenant. The significance of the ark is great, but it was not to be worshipped in any way. Nor are we to bow before the cross, or anything upon the earth, but alone before the LORD and before the Lamb, sitting at his right hand. The LORD, who thrones above the mercy seat is to be worshipped. The LORD, who died upon the cross and rose from the dead, the Lamb of God seated at the right hand of the Father, is to be worshipped, not only by us as his church, but also by all of the angels! For was it not the LORD himself, who said to him:](#)

[The LORD says to you, my lord: "Take your throne at my right hand, while I make your enemies your footstool." The scepter of your sovereign might the LORD will extend from Zion. The LORD says: "Rule over your enemies! Yours is princely power from the day of your birth. In holy splendor before the daystar, like the dew I begot you." The LORD has sworn and will not waver: "Like Melchizedek you are a priest forever." At your right hand is the Lord, who crushes kings on the day of wrath Ps 110,1-5](#)

And again, when talking about the everlasting dominion of Jesus:

I saw One like a son of man coming, on the clouds of heaven; When he reached the Ancient One and was presented before him, He received dominion, glory, and kingship; nations and peoples of every language serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not be taken away, his kingship shall not be destroyed. Dan 7,13-14

And was not this same son of man the Lamb of God on the throne, seen by John in his revelation?

and they cried out in a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength, honor and glory and blessing." Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, everything in the universe, cry out: "To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor, glory and might, forever and ever." Rev 5,12-13

But who will stand at the coming of the Messiah? Who will accept his rule as LORD in their lives in a world full of temptations and darkness?

Why do the nations gather together? Why do their people devise useless plots? Kings take their stands. Rulers make plans together against the LORD and against his Messiah by saying, "Let's break apart their chains and shake off their ropes." Ps 2,1-3 GWT

Despite the gathering of the nations against the Messiah, his kingdom will be from one end of the earth to the other. Woe to those who stand up against him, the one appointed to judge the living and the dead! For the Messiah will come a second time, this time to judge the earth. And all who lay in the dust will rise before him.

Then he speaks to them in his anger. In his burning anger he terrifies them by saying, "I have installed my own king on Zion, my holy mountain." I will announce the LORD's decree. He said to me: "You are my Son. Today I have become your Father. Ask me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance and the ends of the earth as your own possession. You will break them with an iron scepter. You will smash them to pieces like pottery." Ps 2,5-9

How futile to be found as those who resist the will of God as he exalts his Son as King of kings and LORD or Lords! For the Messiah is also the Son, destined to an eternal kingdom. His enemies will be made his footstool and those who resist him will be smashed to pieces by his iron sceptre. The meek Lamb of God is also the Lion of Judah. For those who do not bow their knees on this earth, they will certainly bow them after their death⁷⁸, but then it will be too late to change their eternal judgment.

Let us fear and honor the Son as we fear and honor the Father⁷⁹. Let us kiss him in love, and do homage before him who is to rule all nations! For only they who love his name shall inherit and dwell in the Promised Land⁸⁰!

Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of the earth. Worship the LORD with reverence and rejoice with trembling. Do homage to the Son, that He not become

⁷⁸ Phil 2,9 Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

⁷⁹ Joh 5,22-23 Nor does the Father judge anyone, but he has given all judgment to his Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

⁸⁰ Ps 69,36 The seed also of His servants shall inherit it; and they that love His name shall dwell therein.

[angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! Ps 2,10-12 NAS](#)

They who do not take heed to his warning do it to their own shame! There is a very special rest for the people of God, but it is only for those who will take refuge in Him. By finding refuge in the Messiah, and calling the LORD our shepherd, we will be led by him in green pastures; he will lead us to drink by the still waters and refresh our souls.

And so, just as the ark of the LORD, the LORD of all the earth, went before those who crossed the Jordan with Jesus (Joshua), so does the cross of Jesus, the LORD of all the earth, go before us as we enter the waters of baptism and are born as he was born, by the Holy Spirit. By faith we are entering a covenant where Jesus is our Lord, we are taking refuge under his wings! We have left Egypt, we have left the wilderness where the dead bodies of the unbelieving have been buried. They did not take refuge in the Messiah, the Son. They did not let themselves be led by Jesus to the green pastures and the still waters, to the Promised Land.

Why did he who knew no sin enter the waters of baptism, if not for our sakes that were to enter with him the new covenant? The people of the first covenant entered the land of Israel for the first time as a nation under the instruction of Jesus (Joshua). At this time Israel was a land flowing with milk and honey.

The people of the new covenant, first declared in the baptism of John, enter through the water the Kingdom of God⁸¹. Was it not fitting of the LORD, that Jesus himself was baptized by John in the Jordan River, in the desert of Judea, near or even at the place where the waters of the Jordan parted? How fitting that this is the only door leading out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God!

All people of all nations had been locked up since Adam behind the carefully guarded walls by the prince of darkness. Only through the miracle of God did a few individuals like Noah and Abraham escape from this kingdom. And now, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, a huge section of the wall has been broken through. Both his death and resurrection are to be attained in the water of baptism by those who hearken to the evangelists. Just as the officers proclaiming to the Israelites to follow the ark into the Jordan, the evangelists cry out to all people, follow Jesus into the water of the covenant. How impossible it is for anyone to escape who does not listen and does not let himself be led by the ark across the Jordan!

[He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Col 1,13-14](#)

And was it not that same cloud which had led the people of Israel faithfully for forty years? And was he not beckoning them to the bank of the Jordan? Was not the new covenant established upon the atonement? Was not the yearly atonement upon the Ark of the Covenant only a shadow of the eternal atonement accomplished by the sacrifice of the Messiah himself?

[he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due. Is 53,8b Jewish Publication Society](#)

⁸¹ Joh 3,5 Jesus answered, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.

Instead of stroke of judgment hitting us, it hit him as he was cut off out of the land of the living. Because of our guilt we were condemned to eternal judgment, yet he took it in our place.

[All we like sheep did go astray, we turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath made to light on him the iniquity of us all. Is 53,6 Jewish Publication Society](#)

Did not the LORD speak to Moses from above the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant? Was it not concerning the sacrifices for sin that he instructed him? Would the establishing of the new covenant require an even greater sacrifice?

[If He would render Himself as a guilt offering Is 53,10b NAS](#)

What did Isaiah see as he spoke of this very unusual human sacrifice? Certainly the priest would never take an Israelite and render him as a guilt offering! Such a sacrifice would never be permitted in the first covenant! When did an Israelite ever render Himself as a guilt offering for the iniquity of us all?

[because he bared his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Is 53,12 Jewish Publication Society](#)

Could it be that the atoning sacrifices of the first covenant were foretelling of a more perfect sacrifice, on which the new covenant would one day be established?

[The days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Jer 31,31](#)

As the Messiah arrived in the temple, the first covenant had already shown great erosion of age. The tent had fallen to the ground. The temple of Solomon had been utterly destroyed. The Ark of the Covenant had disappeared. Moses had established the covenant of the law, but this covenant had been broken. A covenant based on loving the Lord with all their hearts had become an observance of abundant meaningless rites and traditions. The hearts had become closed to the leading of the cloud and they became absorbed with keeping the precepts of man in their attempt to establish their own righteousness. To everything God had commanded them through Moses, they had added countless other precepts, thereby breaking the covenant. Was not this the sin of Saul, who thought sacrifices could be compared with obedience?

[It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt; for they broke my covenant and I had to show myself their master, says the LORD.](#)

The generations following those who entered the Promised Land did not obey the words the LORD spoken to Moses. They did not follow the example of Moses and Aaron. Instead they worshipped other gods. Later they replaced obedience to the word of God with regulations and precepts of man, where their hearts were far from him.

[The Lord said: Since this people draws near with words only and honors me with their lips alone, though their hearts are far from me, And their reverence for me has become routine observance of the precepts of men, therefore I will again deal with this people in surprising and wondrous fashion: The wisdom of its wise men shall perish and the understanding of its prudent men be hid. Isa 29,13-14](#)

And the LORD, longsuffering and patient, has never ceased in his love for Israel. Instead of dealing harshly towards them, he foretold of dealing surprisingly and wondrous, yet where he would hide it from the wise and the prudent. Was it not in God's wisdom, that his eternal covenant with Israel be hidden from the rulers? Was not the stone of the Lord's eternal temple far too valuable to have been given over to the builders?

[The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the LORD has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes. Ps 118,22-23](#)

Yet the Lord knew that the covenant would be broken even from the beginning. Even during the days of Moses, as the first covenant was being established, he foretold of the new covenant, based not upon Moses, but upon the Messiah. Even as Jesus (Joshua) was speaking to them the promise of his covenant on the Jordan, the council of the LORD was already firm. The Jesus speaking this covenant to them on the waters of a Jordan was foretelling of the coming Messiah, who would also be called Jesus, speaking his covenant to those about to cross the water of the new covenant into the kingdom of God.

[I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My name, I will require it of him. Deut 18,18-19 Jewish Publication Society](#)

The LORD spoke to Moses from above the mercy seat and he spoke to Moses on the mount. Moses was obedient and did what the LORD said. He was commanded by the LORD to write down his words⁸² and read them to the people⁸³. With the new covenant established by the Messiah it was different. His words were given him directly; they were put in his mouth. He did not speak to the people from behind a veil. But for many, who were not willing to take refuge in Him, his words were only heard in parables⁸⁴. For all who do not hearken to him, it will be required of them.

Why would God want to keep secret from the Israelites of the first covenant so much of his wisdom? Why would the LORD hide the untold riches from the people he so greatly loved?

[The secret things belong unto the LORD our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. Deut 29,29](#)

What could possibly be the plan that the LORD had, that the Messiah would not be recognized by the leaders of Israel? What secrets did he choose not to tell the wise or the prudent? Had they not been waiting for centuries for his coming? Was he not the red heifer, being watched for by the whole nation?

The Messiah did not come to restore the ruins of the first covenant! He laid the cornerstone for a completely new temple. This temple would not be a shadow of the heavenly. No, the kingdom of Heaven would itself be established on earth! The Promised Land would not be a beautiful country on this earth, but Heaven itself! And those who would enter this kingdom by the waters of baptism would be seated with the Messiah in the heavens.

⁸² Deut 31,26 Take this scroll of the law and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD, your God, that there it may be a witness against you.

⁸³ Deut 31,12 Assemble the people--men, women and children, as well as the aliens who live in your communities--that they may hear it and learn it, and so fear the LORD, your God, and carefully observe all the words of this law.

⁸⁴ I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter dark sayings concerning days of old; Ps 78,2 Jewish Publication Society

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ (by grace you have been saved), raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. Eph 2,5-8

Is it not true that all of our righteousness before the holiness of God appear as filthy rags? How could the Messiah be built into the temple being run by the leaders of Israel? How fitting that the wisdom of the wise and prudent was brought to nothing!

Instead, this new tabernacle of the living God would not be limited to the boundaries of Israel, but would be known everywhere and be a mountain that fills the whole earth!

I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice, I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations, To open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness. I am the LORD, this is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. Isa 42,6-48

The Messiah of Israel will become the light of the nations! He, who comes forth from Jacob shall himself be the covenant of the people! And to whom has he been sent? Is it not to the blind, to the prisoners, to those in the dungeons and living in darkness? Where can the atoning sacrifice be so glorious as in the eyes of those dead in their trespasses and sins? To whom is the light of the nations so valuable, as to those living in the dungeons of darkness? What is this new covenant which will be made to include both Jews and heathen?

Incline your ear, and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a prince and commander to the peoples. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee; because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for He hath glorified thee. Is 53,3-5 Jewish Publication Society

This new covenant is to be an everlasting covenant. The covenant of marriage is sworn by an oath which only lasts until in death we do part. The covenant of circumcision was made upon flesh which must die. The eternal covenant is based upon eternal promises, an oath that continues after death, for all eternity.

The everlasting covenant does not have Moses as its commander. It is him who is witnessed to the peoples who is also the commander. The prince is the same one whose death we proclaim. The LORD, the God of Israel, will glorify this prince. And to this prince a new nation shall come to exist, which did not exist earlier.

His reign would be throughout the whole earth, yet established on the Throne of David!

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. Is 9,6-7

The LORD established a first government by the establishing of the first covenant, Israel. On the throne of the first government, the throne of David, the new government will be established.

This government will not be established on the first covenant, but on the everlasting covenant which is for the peoples, not just Israel.

And just as the new covenant is everlasting, this government will have no end. He who is to rule this government is the son which was given to us. For our sakes he came to this earth. Yet that same son who came as a simple child shall be called the Mighty God! Yes, Jesus, the son of Mary is the ruler of the eternal government. He has been glorified; he sits at the right hand of the Father. He shall be called the Eternal Father! He shall be called the Prince of Peace! And just as John cried out, so do those who belong to his kingdom cry out in intercession: 'your Kingdom come to the earth as it is in Heaven'.

[In the lifetime of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed or delivered up to another people; rather, it shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and put an end to them, and it shall stand forever. Dan 2,44](#)

And so in the lifetime of the kings of Rome, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, the word of the LORD came to John. The LORD of heaven placed the laver of salvation before the gateway leading into his kingdom. The time had arrived for the establishing of the new covenant.

[But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and kinsmen how to know the LORD. All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the LORD, for I will forgive their evildoing and remember their sin no more. Jer 31,31-34](#)

And so, in God's perfect wisdom, he made a new covenant with the house of Israel, this time with the mediator being the Messiah himself! And this time the laws would not be written on stone, but upon hearts desiring to know the LORD, desiring to be his people. The God who spoke almost solely to Moses and Joshua in the first covenant would now speak to all, from the least to the greatest, in the new covenant. Instead of threatening them with a curse for disobedience, he would forgive their evildoings and not even remember their sins.

How blessed are those who would belong to this new covenant, to whom the LORD would not even impute iniquity! How manifest his favor to each individual belonging to the eternal covenant! Are they not the bride, sparkling jewels on his diadem?

[and I will give them their recompense in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed. Isa 8b-9 Jewish Publication Society](#)

Starting with the Israelites who listened to Jesus, an everlasting covenant was made amongst the nations. And those of the Israelites who entered the everlasting covenant became known amongst the nations. The great favor the LORD showed them made known to all the earth that these are the seed which the LORD has blessed. Through them the peoples of the earth acknowledged that the LORD, the God of Israel is the true God, creator of heaven and earth.

[I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of victory, as a bridegroom putteth on a priestly diadem, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. Isa 61,10 Jewish Publication Society](#)

But what happened to those who would not listen to Jesus? What about the rest of the Israelites who would not hearken to the prophet like as to Moses? How did the LORD require it of them?

Was not Jerusalem destroyed in such a cruel way? Was not the temple laid waste and did not an end come to the covenant of sacrifices? Like a grain of wheat dying in the ground, the glory of Israel died and came to an end. Is not this what John had prophesied?

I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire. Mt 3,11-12

Under the threat of unquenchable fire he proclaimed Jesus to them. He knew that their hearts were not prepared to receive the Messiah. Did not John give to the religious leaders their last warning of the wrath to come?

You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Mt 3,7-10

It was the final hour and the ax was already being laid upon the roots. Who would prepare themselves; who would sanctify themselves for the receiving of the Messiah? Let him repent with a sincere heart and produce good fruit as evidence. The fire was already blazing. The trees not bearing good fruit would shortly be thrown in and go up in smoke.

Instead of them crying out to the LORD, that he would return to Israel as he had been in the time of Moses, they had become comfortable in their lives without the pillar of cloud. Is that not what they cried out to Moses on the Mount?

When the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the trumpet blast and the mountain smoking, they all feared and trembled. So they took up a position much farther away and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we shall die." Ex 20,18-19

The LORD wished to reveal himself to them, but they continually hardened their hearts. They did not want God to speak with them. How disbelieving were they to think that the LORD would kill them as he tried to teach them the fear of the LORD.

With their hearts as hard as stone, the LORD wrote his commands on tablets of stone. At the very time the LORD was writing his commands on the stone tablets of the covenant, every single Israelite not with Moses was worshiping a golden calf and crying out to it, 'This is your God, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt'.

Do you really think that it was different at the time when the Messiah arrived? Is that not the reason why the LORD first sent John the Baptist to the Jordan River to baptize?

Lo, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, Before the day of the LORD comes, the great and terrible day, To turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the land with doom. Mal 3,23-24

How strongly would the LORD have cursed Israel if they had in one accord rejected the Messiah! Was not this why he first sent John? Was not John born to one of the most respected families in Israel? Was not his father a priest from the house of Aaron? Was it not as he was doing service in the sanctuary that Gabriel appeared to him? And was it not known throughout all of the countryside even from his birth that he was a prophet who would prepare the way for the LORD, the Messiah? What better way could the LORD soften the hearts of his people, that they might listen to him as he would appear!

How different was John than anyone else in Israel! Although from one of the most respected priestly families, he fasted day and night in intercession for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Wearing a hairy garment made of camel's hair with a leather girdle about his loins⁸⁵, his food being locusts and wild honey, he cried out for his people Israel. This was a priest from the house of Aaron fulfilling his service outside the temple, outside the camp. Unlike Elijah, who only opened his mouth in rare occasions because of the hardness of their hearts, John began crying loudly in the wilderness for the people to repent. And the people of Israel heard his crying.

What was John interceding for? Was it not that the people return to the LORD. Was it not that the pillar of cloud would return to the people? Was not his greatest intercession that the LORD would have mercy on his people; that he would remember the holy covenant, even though their hearts were hard like stone?

Did not his father prophecy, after not being able to speak for nine months? And was not his wife old and barren from her youth? Was not this so unusual and obviously from the LORD that the rumor of it reached people throughout Judea⁸⁶? Zechariah the priest, from the house of Aaron, prophesied as the day of his birth arrived.

[And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God by which the daybreak from on high will visit us to shine on those who sit in darkness and death's shadow, to guide our feet into the path of peace. Lk 1,76-79](#)

The people of Israel were in great darkness and in death's shadow. Yet the leaders were completely unaware of this darkness, all of their thoughts being involved with keeping the traditions of their fathers. And suddenly the LORD appeared in his temple, the pillar of cloud had returned!

[At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins. Mt 3,5-6](#)

Most of the Israelites expected to never again see the pillar of cloud. Where was the God of their fathers? Why did his miraculous works cease, from which they heard every Sabbath in the synagogue? How long would they continue to suffer under the cruel yoke of the Romans and the even more cruel yoke of sin?

And then the Messiah arrived on the banks of the Jordan!

⁸⁵ 2Kgs 1,7-8 The king asked them, "What was the man like who came up to you and said these things to you?" Wearing a hairy garment," they replied, "with a leather girdle about his loins." "It is Elijah the Tishbite!" he exclaimed.

⁸⁶ Lk 1,65-66 Then fear came upon all their neighbors, and all these matters were discussed throughout the hill country of Judea. All who heard these things took them to heart, saying, "What, then, will this child be?" For surely the hand of the Lord was with him.

I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel." John testified further, saying, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the holy Spirit.' Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God. Joh 1,31-34

John did not come simply to baptize for repentance. With his own words he says, 'I came baptizing with water that he might be made known to Israel'. John foretold the coming of the Messiah. As he baptized Jesus and saw the Spirit come down and remain on him, he told all of Israel that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah. The cloud of pillar came again, only this time he descended in the form of a dove on the Messiah.

Who was this Jesus, who was raised in Nazareth? How greatly did the miracles exceed any of the prophets of earlier times! He would speak and the dead would rise from their graves. Great crowds of people followed him, bringing those sick with various diseases to him and he healed them all.

How different was that from Elijah, who in his lifetime worked only a handful of miracles! How different was that from Moses, who never worked any healings or raised any dead people, but was only a servant to the pillar of cloud! In Jesus the pillar of cloud had descended and remained! He was the Messiah, the mediator of the new everlasting covenant with Israel.

What did John say as he saw all of the people leaving him and going to Jesus to be baptized?

So they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing and everyone is coming to him." Joh 3,26

Was he jealous of Jesus? This certainly marked the end of his appearance to Israel! John was not jealous, but greatly rejoiced!

You yourselves can testify that I said (that) I am not the Messiah, but that I was sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom; the best man, who stands and listens for him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made complete. Joh 3,28-29

John said, 'He must increase; I must decrease.' And in the last weeks before he was thrown into prison he gave his last warning to those who would not listen to Jesus, the Messiah.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him. Joh 3,36

In the wilderness of Judea Joshua was preparing to cross the Jordan. The people sanctified themselves and their hearts were upright before the LORD. After waiting for forty years they were ready to be led into the Promised Land. And then Joshua made a very bold confession, yet a confession which was spoken in obedience to what the LORD had told him.

When the soles of the feet of the priests carrying the ark of the LORD, the Lord of the whole earth, touch the water of the Jordan, it will cease to flow; for the water flowing down from upstream will halt in a solid bank. Josh 3,13

How could Joshua be so certain that such a great miracle was about happen? Maybe it would be better to not say this, but begin building boats? After all, all they wanted to do was cross the Jordan. What did it matter how they entered the Promised Land?

But Joshua had learned to hear the voice of the LORD! He didn't need even consider that the LORD might not do this great miracle. The LORD had told him that this would happen, and he then told the Israelites what the LORD had told him. Certainly there were some who were not so convinced, but they didn't utter a word. 'We will see if the LORD is with Joshua as he was with Moses' they must have thought.

[The people struck their tents to cross the Jordan, with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant ahead of them. Josh 3,14](#)

Still nothing had happened! The priests were ordered to carry the ark across the Jordan. Unless something happened soon, both the priests and the ark would meet a tragic end. The priests didn't swerve in their confidence. At that time of the year the water of the Jordan was overflowing the banks. The priests carrying the ark who were in the front reached the water. Did they stop? Or did they walk right into the water of the Jordan?

[No sooner had these priestly bearers of the ark waded into the waters at the edge of the Jordan, which overflows all its banks during the entire season of the harvest, than the waters flowing from upstream halted, backing up in a solid mass for a very great distance indeed, from Adam, a city in the direction of Zarethan; while those flowing downstream toward the Salt Sea of the Arabah disappeared entirely. Thus the people crossed over opposite Jericho. Josh 3,15-16](#)

The whole camp of the Israelites saw the miracle together. A large solid mass of water rose upstream in the distance and the rest of the waters disappeared, flowing down into the Salt Sea. Just as Joshua had spoken, the LORD revealed himself. Those who may not have been so certain silently rejoiced as they hurried across the Jordan. Even though they did have some doubts in their heart, they still entered into the Promised Land. But it was this experience that gave them confidence in their leader Joshua⁸⁷.

As someone believes the proclamation of the Messiah's death, they are led to the water. They are told about the great miracle which is about to take place. Before they go into the water they are told all of their sins will be forgiven, they will come free from the slavery of sin and enter the kingdom of God. They also might have some doubts in their heart. Maybe they hear a quiet voice saying, how can this water change my life? Will it really set me free from sin? Is it not just a symbolic act? Yet they have followed the voice of the one proclaiming Jesus. Their feet come to the water and in spite of their doubts they enter in, obeying the message of the gospel. And as they rise out of the water they realize that something is happening that they didn't expect. The doors of Heaven were opened to them and they had just walked in. They realize the oath they had promised has become their most valuable possession as Jesus becomes LORD of their lives and they are born into the kingdom of God.

Unknown to the one baptized, angels had been watching. There was a book that Jesus commanded to be opened, the Book of Life. And in agreement to true repentance and the confession of faith, a new name was written into this book. Calls of glory and joy could be heard clear across the court as the book was closed. Angels were given charge, being told; see to it, that

⁸⁷ Josh 3,7 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know I am with you, as I was with Moses.

their names are not removed from this book. Protect them from the evil one! Assist them in keeping their oath of faithfulness to Jesus as their LORD. No higher duty could ever be assigned an angel!

Then the angels saw the old man crucified with Jesus. Jesus himself had also been present, being deeply moved by the words spoken beside the waters. He, and only he, opened one of the huge books of judgment. He patiently removed numbers of chapters. Every word which had been spoken, every deed committed and every temptation they had yielded to, they were all written here. A single episode of masturbation was described in minute detail, with every motive and intent of the heart carefully recorded. The guilt of the one baptized was no question to the angels; their sin was scarlet, red like crimson. Because of this abundant sin, there was no other answer. Silently the body of sin was placed upon the cross; it was cut off as the heavenly circumcision was complete. All of the pages of handwritings were then taken by Jesus and nailed upon his cross, a cross which had now become a graveyard for the old man of countless saints. And on this eternal grave these pages of transgressions were to remain, never again to be opened.

Just as in the womb of a woman, the word of God had been planted solidly years earlier and had been slowly growing. The Spirit of God had found access into the heart and conceived. The unborn child had been developing constantly. As the wind, you could hear it blowing and you could hear the sound it makes, but you could not tell from where it was coming or where it was going. And so was a new creation being prepared for eternity and glory. The one who baptized and those who aided him had the appearance of midwives to the angels. And as the baptism was complete, a new baby had been born into the kingdom of God. The angels cried out for joy concerning this new baby. The Father couldn't remain silent in his bowels of mercy. But none was so overjoyed with this new child of God as Jesus himself.

Taking a special garment, which had been prepared for this very occasion, Jesus wraps it upon the saint, even while he is still dripping from the water of the laver. And as belonging to the new, everlasting covenant, the name of Jesus is entrusted to this beloved child and written upon his forehead.

In the middle of the Jordan River the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant stood and didn't continue. All of the people went over on dry ground, even the wheels of the carts did not sink.

[And the priests that bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, while all Israel passed over on dry ground, until all the nation were passed clean over the Jordan. Josh 3,17 Jewish Publication Society](#)

The Ark of the Covenant found its place on dry ground. That very special seat where the Cherubim look in admiration was now in the midst of the Jordan River.

How accurately had the Cherubim observed this baptism! How intently did they try to grasp the glory of the atoning sacrifice! And yet how solemnly earnest they were towards the one receiving this untold honor, that the oath be guarded with faithfulness and the thief, the devil, be contended with and resisted!

And all together they looked at this new saint, freshly washed in the blood of the Lamb. After the circumcision, the sin had become white as snow. The bitter smell of hyssop could be sensed, still remaining in the garment from the suffering of the crucifixion.

Now cleansed from sin, the greatest gift of heaven is about to be delivered. Hands are laid upon the wet hair and the voices of the midwives cry out before the Throne of the Father. The words, spoken only a little louder than a whisper upon the earth were amplified before the throne and could be heard by all, 'receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'. The Father on the throne nods in delight, for he himself had made the promise. And as the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the water of the Jordan, so the Holy Spirit descends upon this new son of God, who is ordained to live as Jesus lived and be led as Jesus had been led. And he gave abundant gifts.

GILEAD AND THE CIRCUMCISION

As the Israelites crossed the Jordan River they camped in Gilead.

[The people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and camped in Gilgal on the eastern limits of Jericho. Josh 4,19](#)

It was four days before the Passover. Was not the tenth day of the first month the day in which the Passover Lamb was set aside? Was not this the day on which preparation began for the Passover? After crossing the Jordan they still were not quite prepared! Many of them were still uncircumcised and according to the commandment of the LORD on Moses, anyone who would not be circumcised would be cut off from his people and was forbidden from partaking in the Passover.

[At Gilgal Joshua set up the twelve stones which had been taken from the Jordan, saying to the Israelites, "In the future, when the children among you ask their fathers what these stones mean, you shall inform them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan here on dry ground.' For the LORD, your God, dried up the waters of the Jordan in front of you until you crossed over, just as the LORD, your God, had done at the Red Sea, which he dried up in front of us until we crossed over; Josh 4,20-23](#)

What was the meaning of these twelve stones? Did not each of them represent one of the tribes of Israel? Were not these twelve names written upon the twelve gates of heaven⁸⁸? And did not Jesus take Peter and many of his apostles from the stones of the Jordan baptized by John? And were not the names of these twelve apostles written upon the high walls having the gates⁸⁹? And so the heavenly city was separated from the rest of the world by high walls, the teaching of the apostles. Whoever would heed these teachings as given by the twelve apostles of the Lamb would rest safe in the protective walls of the kingdom of God. Did not Jesus charge very specially these twelve to make disciples of all nations, baptizing those that believed the gospel?

All four gospels proclaim the new covenant; they all begin in their first chapters with the baptism of John on the River Jordan, the entrance way into the kingdom of God.

[It was the children whom he raised up in their stead whom Joshua circumcised, for these were yet with foreskins, not having been circumcised on the journey. Josh 5,7](#)

Because of the disobedience of the Israelites in the wilderness, they did not regard the commandment of the LORD to circumcise their children the eighth day. They were a very rebellious people and had hardened their hearts against the LORD.

Their children however were different. Because of their faith and obedience they had inherited the Promised Land. And they were ready to do anything the LORD would require of them.

[On this occasion the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelite nation for the second time." So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath-haaraloth, Josh 5,2-3](#)

⁸⁸ Rev 21,12 It had a massive, high wall, with twelve gates where twelve angels were stationed and on which names were inscribed, (the names) of the twelve tribes of the Israelites.

⁸⁹ And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Rev 12,14 NAS

Their circumcision happened immediately. As soon as they crossed the Jordan River they were circumcised. For the next three days before the Passover they would recover.

[When the rite had been performed, the whole nation remained in camp where they were, until they recovered. Josh 5,8](#)

All men not yet forty years were circumcised. Once Joshua had finished the circumcision, the LORD revealed to his perspective of the Israelites. He made known to Joshua why this circumcision was so very important.

[Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have removed the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the place is called Gilgal to the present day. Josh 5,9](#)

How prophetic were these actions of the new covenant! On the day and at the place where the Israelites had crossed the Jordan they were cleansed from the reproach of Egypt.

On the day and at the place where sinners are baptized they are cleansed from the corruption of the world!

Just as the LORD removed the reproach of Egypt from the Israelites who crossed the Jordan by circumcision of the flesh, so does the LORD remove the reproach of sin from those who are baptized and receive the circumcision of Christ.

[In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not administered by hand, by stripping off the carnal body, with the circumcision of Christ. You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. Col 2,11-12](#)

God made the covenant of circumcision as a covenant in the flesh. Whoever would not be circumcised in their flesh would be cut off from Israel.

[Yes, both the houseborn slaves and those acquired with money must be circumcised. Thus my covenant shall be in your flesh as an everlasting pact. If a male is uncircumcised, that is, if the flesh of his foreskin has not been cut away, such a one shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant. Gen 17,13-14](#)

Through the new covenant which we enter through baptism, the circumcision of Christ, we do not have any piece of flesh cut away. Instead our sinful, carnal body, sometimes named the old man, is cut away. The circumcision of the flesh to enter the first covenant foretold the old man being crucified with Christ in baptism, which happens as we enter the new covenant.

[Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Rom 6,6-7.](#)

We were dead in our sins and trespasses. We were full of the odor of death. We were dead because the sin in us had brought death since the day of our birth. Not due to a choice of our

own, we were born as children of wrath in the kingdom of darkness.⁹⁰ And even from our early days as a child we were servants to sin.

[And even when you were dead \(in\) transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he brought you to life along with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions; Col 2,13](#)

As we were baptized we received the circumcision of Christ. All of the uncleanness of our flesh, the filth of uncircumcision was removed. And we who were dead are made alive as we raise in baptism with Jesus and are united in his resurrection.

[But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ \(by grace you have been saved\), raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. Eph 2,4-7](#)

How immeasurable are the riches of those who are baptized! In their resurrection with Jesus they are seated with him in the heavens! How unlimited is the grace we will receive in the ages to come!

The day of their crossing the Jordan was the tenth of Nissan. This is the day the Israelites begin in their preparation for the Passover. And on this tenth day they were circumcised.

[While the Israelites were encamped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, they celebrated the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth of the month. Josh 5,10](#)

Was not the Passover of the new covenant established also on the fourteenth of the month? Was it not in this evening that he gave from the unleavened bread of the Passover and said to his disciples, 'This is my body'? And do we not partake of his body when we are baptized?

[The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. 1 Cor 10,16a-17](#)

As we are baptized, we become a part of the body of Jesus. Is not this the requirement of those who partake of that one loaf, that they belong to his body?

[As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body 1.Cor 12,12-13a](#)

And as those of the first covenant prepared for partaking of the Passover by being circumcised, so are those of the new covenant prepared for partaking of the body of Christ when they are baptized and receive the circumcision of Christ.

If God forbids those who are not yet circumcised from partaking of the Passover, how much more does he forbid those who have not yet been circumcised by Christ in baptism from eating his body and drinking his blood!

The Spirit of God had gone into the darkness of Egypt as a pillar of cloud. From that very first Passover forty years earlier he had never left them. His mission was to deliver them into the Promised Land. After crossing the Jordan River this mission was accomplished.

⁹⁰ You were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you once lived following the age of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the desires of our flesh, following the wishes of the flesh and the impulses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest. Eph 2,1.3

On the day after the Passover they ate of the produce of the land in the form of unleavened cakes and parched grain. On that same day after the Passover on which they ate of the produce of the land, the manna ceased. No longer was there manna for the Israelites, who that year ate of the yield of the land of Canaan. Josh 5,11-12

After the Holy Spirit leads us into the kingdom of God, we receive the manna from heaven, the body of Jesus broken for us. We partake of the Passover Lamb in the body and blood of the new covenant, given to us the night of the Lord's last supper.

What better occasion to partake of this body and blood of Jesus as on the day we cross the Jordan? How encouraging to find the Lord waiting for us as we come out of the water, receiving us at his table! Having been cleansed from our sins and having been born of the Holy Spirit we have entered communion with Jesus, where the rest of our lives we will love him more and more.

The pillar of cloud ceased to prepare them daily their manna after having been with them for forty years. How precious was the Lord to his people and how little appreciation did they shown him while wandering in the wilderness. Now they had received the land promised to their father Abraham, a land flowing with milk and honey.

And who was it that came to greet Joshua as he arrived after crossing the Jordan River? Was it not Jesus himself, this time not in a thorn bush but as a man?

While Joshua was near Jericho, he raised his eyes and saw one who stood facing him, drawn sword in hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you one of us or of our enemies?" He replied, "Neither. I am the captain of the host of the LORD and I have just arrived." Then Joshua fell prostrate to the ground in worship, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" The captain of the host of the LORD replied to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy." And Joshua obeyed. Josh 5,13-15

After we enter the kingdom of God, we are commanded to obey the captain of the host of the LORD! Let us follow the example of Joshua and obey Jesus as LORD of our lives! Was that not the oath we had made? As Joshua crossed the Jordan the captain of the host of the LORD had just arrived.

Let us also therefore, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, laying aside every weight, and sin which so easily entangles us, run with endurance the race that lies before us, looking stedfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith: who, in view of the joy lying before him, endured the cross, having despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebr 12,1-2 DBT

If we hold fast to Jesus no enemy will be able to stand before us all the days of our lives. Let us keep our eyes steadfast on him, seeking to know him ever better until the day we see him face to face!

SOLOMON AND THE SEA LAVER

1Kgs 7,23

The sea was then cast; it was made with a circular rim, and measured ten cubits across, five in height, and thirty in circumference.

1Kgs 7,24

Under the brim, gourds encircled it, ten to the cubit all the way around; the gourds were in two rows and were cast in one mold with the sea.

1Kgs 7,25

This rested on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east, with their haunches all toward the center, where the sea was set upon them.

1Kgs 7,26

It was a handbreadth thick, and its brim resembled that of a cup, being lily-shaped. Its capacity was two thousand measures.

THE HEIFER OFFERED BY ELIJAH

1Kgs 18,32

He built an altar in honor of the LORD with the stones, and made a trench around the altar large enough for two seahs of grain.

1Kgs 18,33

When he had arranged the wood, he cut up the young bull and laid it on the wood.

[1Kgs 18,34](#)

"Fill four jars with water," he said, "and pour it over the holocaust and over the wood." "Do it again," he said, and they did it again. "Do it a third time," he said, and they did it a third time.

1Kgs 18,35

The water flowed around the altar, and the trench was filled with the water.

1Kgs 18,36

At the time for offering sacrifice, the prophet Elijah came forward and said, "LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things by your command.

1Kgs 18,37

Answer me, LORD! Answer me, that this people may know that you, LORD, are God and that you have brought them back to their senses."

1Kgs 18,38

The LORD'S fire came down and consumed the holocaust, wood, stones, and dust, and it lapped up the water in the trench.

1Kgs 18,39

Seeing this, all the people fell prostrate and said, "The LORD is God! The LORD is God!"

1Kgs 18,40

Then Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Let none of them escape!" They were seized, and Elijah had them brought down to the brook Kishon and there he slit their throats.

1Kgs 18,41

Elijah then said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain."

1Kgs 18,42

The Ordination of Elisha

2Kgs 2,6

Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here; the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan." "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live," Elisha replied, "I will not leave you." And so the two went on together.

2Kgs 2,7

Fifty of the guild prophets followed, and when the two stopped at the Jordan, stood facing them at a distance.

[2Kgs 2,8](#)

Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up and struck the water, which divided, and both crossed over on dry ground.

2Kgs 2,9

When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask for whatever I may do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha answered, "May I receive a double portion of your spirit."

2Kgs 2,10

"You have asked something that is not easy," he replied. "Still, if you see me taken up from you, your wish will be granted; otherwise not."

2Kgs 2,11

As they walked on conversing, a flaming chariot and flaming horses came between them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

2Kgs 2,12

When Elisha saw it happen he cried out, "My father! my father! Israel's chariots and drivers!" But when he could no longer see him, Elisha gripped his own garment and tore it in two.

2Kgs 2,13

Then he picked up Elijah's mantle which had fallen from him, and went back and stood at the bank of the Jordan.

2Kgs 2,14

Wielding the mantle which had fallen from Elijah, he struck the water in his turn and said, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" When Elisha struck the water it divided and he crossed over.

Kgs 2,14

Wielding the mantle which had fallen from Elijah, he struck the [water](#) in his turn and said, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" When Elisha struck the [water](#) it divided and he crossed over.

2Kgs 2,19

Once the inhabitants of the city complained to Elisha, "The site of the city is fine indeed, as my lord can see, but the [water](#) is bad and the land unfruitful."

2Kgs 2,21

he went out to the spring and threw salt into it, saying, "Thus says the LORD, 'I have purified this [water](#). Never again shall death or miscarriage spring from it.'"

2Kgs 2,22

And the [water](#) has stayed pure even to this day, just as Elisha prophesied.

THE CLEANSING OF NAAMAN THE LEPER

2Kgs 5,12

Are not the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than all the [waters](#) of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be cleansed?" With this, he turned about in anger and left.

THE IRON FLOATING ON THE WATER

2Kgs 6,5

While one of them was felling a tree trunk, the iron axhead slipped into the [water](#). "O master," he cried out, "it was borrowed!"

2Kgs 6,6

"Where did it fall?" asked the man of God. When he pointed out the spot, Elisha cut off a stick, threw it into the [water](#), and brought the iron to the surface.

ISAIAH CLEANSING WATER

Isa 12,2

God indeed is my savior; I am confident and unafraid. My strength and my courage is the LORD, and he has been my savior.

[Isa 12,3](#)

[Isa 1,16](#)

Wash yourselves clean! Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; cease doing evil;

Isa 1,17

learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow.

Isa 1,18

Come now, let us set things right, says the LORD: Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow; Though they be crimson red, they may become white as wool.

Isa 1,19

If you are willing, and obey, you shall eat the good things of the land;

Isa 1,20

But if you refuse and resist, the sword shall consume you: for the mouth of the LORD has spoken!

Isa 1,21

Isa 4,2

On that day, The branch of the LORD will be luster and glory, and the fruit of the earth will be honor and splendor for the survivors of Israel.

Isa 4,3

He who remains in Zion and he that is left in Jerusalem Will be called holy: every one marked down for life in Jerusalem.

[Isa 4,4](#)

When the Lord washes away the filth of the daughters of Zion, And purges Jerusalem's blood from her midst with a blast of searing judgment,

Isa 4,5

Then will the LORD create, over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her place of assembly, A smoking cloud by day and a light of flaming fire by night.

Isa 4,6

For over all, his glory will be shelter and protection: shade from the parching heat of day, refuge and cover from storm and rain.

With joy you will draw water at the fountain of salvation,

Isa 12,4

and say on that day: Give thanks to the LORD, acclaim his name; among the nations make known his deeds, proclaim how exalted is his name.

THE WASHING OF ISRAEL EZEKIEL

Ezek 16,4

As for your birth, the day you were born your navel cord was not cut; you were neither washed with water nor anointed, nor were you rubbed with salt, nor swathed in swaddling clothes.

Ezek 16,5

No one looked on you with pity or compassion to do any of these things for you. Rather, you were thrown out on the ground as something loathsome, the day you were born.

Ezek 16,6

Then I passed by and saw you weltering in your blood. I said to you: Live in your blood

Ezek 16,7

and grow like a plant in the field. You grew and developed, you came to the age of puberty; your breasts were formed, your hair had grown, but you were still stark naked.

Ezek 16,8

Again I passed by you and saw that you were now old enough for love. So I spread the corner of my cloak over you to cover your nakedness; I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you; you became mine, says the Lord GOD.

[Ezek 16,9](#)

Then I bathed you with water, washed away your blood, and anointed you with oil.

Ezek 16,10

I clothed you with an embroidered gown, put sandals of fine leather on your feet; I gave you a fine linen sash and silk robes to wear.

Ezek 16,11

I adorned you with jewelry: I put bracelets on your arms, a necklace about your neck,

Ezek 16,12

a ring in your nose, pendants in your ears, and a glorious diadem upon your head.

Ezek 16,13

Thus you were adorned with gold and silver; your garments were of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. Fine flour, honey, and oil were your food. You were exceedingly beautiful, with the dignity of a queen.

Ezek 16,14

You were renowned among the nations for your beauty, perfect as it was, because of my splendor which I had bestowed on you, says the Lord GOD.

Ezek 16,15

But you were captivated by your own beauty, you used your renown to make yourself a harlot, and you lavished your harlotry on every passer-by, whose own you became.

Ezek 16,16

You took some of your gowns and made for yourself gaudy high places, where you played the harlot. . . .

Ezek 16,17

You took the splendid gold and silver ornaments that I had given you and made for yourself male images, with which also you played the harlot.

FUTURE ISRAEL PURIFIED EZEKIEL

Ezek 36,23

I will prove the holiness of my great name, profaned among the nations, in whose midst you have profaned it. Thus the nations shall know that I am the LORD, says the Lord GOD, when in their sight I prove my holiness through you.

Ezek 36,24

For I will take you away from among the nations, gather you from all the foreign lands, and bring you back to your own land.

[Ezek 36,25](#)

I will sprinkle clean water upon you to cleanse you from all your impurities, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.

Ezek 36,26

I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts.

Ezek 36,27

I will put my spirit within you and make you live by my statutes, careful to observe my decrees.

Ezek 36,28

You shall live in the land I gave your fathers; you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Ezek 36,29

I will save you from all your impurities; I will order the grain to be abundant, and I will not send famine against you.

JONAH

THE GLORY OF ISRAEL

Zech 12,10

I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and petition; and they shall look on him whom they have thrust through, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only son, and they shall grieve over him as one grieves over a first-born.

Zech 12,11

On that day the mourning in Jerusalem shall be as great as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

Zech 12,12

And the land shall mourn, each family apart: the family of the house of David, and their wives; the family of the house of Nathan, and their wives;

Zech 12,13

the family of the house of Levi, and their wives; the family of Shemei, and their wives;

Zech 12,14

and all the rest of the families, each family apart, and the wives apart. [Zech 13,1](#)

On that day there shall be open to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a fountain to purify from sin and uncleanness.

THE FINAL HOUR AND ETERNAL JUDGMENT

GODLY FEAR

How fearful is the judgment of God⁹¹ against all who reject his salvation! There will be eternal wailing of remorse⁹² in a fiery furnace⁹³ where the grinding⁹⁴ of teeth⁹⁵ will never end⁹⁶. By the plan of God, man and woman were created in the image of God⁹⁷ and destined for eternal love⁹⁸. This love of men and women for Jesus the Messiah is to reach the highest limits⁹⁹, cumulating by her adorning¹⁰⁰ as the eternal wife¹⁰¹ of the Lamb. Yet for many, yielding instead to sin¹⁰², they have been found disobedient to God¹⁰³ and have become his greatest enemies¹⁰⁴. They will depart from this life on a journey that will never end. The damned and accursed of God will join the devil and his angels in eternal torment.¹⁰⁵

Who are we to refuse God's warning¹⁰⁶? We cannot create a single hair on our head¹⁰⁷. We cannot add a moment to our life-span¹⁰⁸. It was not our choice that we were granted the gift of life, but his. He knows every thought of our heart¹⁰⁹, every word we speak¹¹⁰ and every action we take¹¹¹. Is it not reasonable that men should live in the fear of God¹¹²? Should not the Day of

⁹¹ Hebr 10,26-29 If we sin deliberately after receiving knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains sacrifice for sins but a fearful prospect of judgment and a flaming fire that is going to consume the adversaries. Anyone who rejects the law of Moses is put to death without pity on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Do you not think that a much worse punishment is due the one who has contempt for the Son of God, considers unclean the covenant-blood by which he was consecrated, and insults the spirit of grace?

⁹² Mt 8,12 but the children of the kingdom will be driven out into the outer darkness, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth."

⁹³ Mt 13,42 They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.

⁹⁴ Lk 13,28 And there will be wailing and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves cast out.

⁹⁵ Mt 13,49 Thus it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.

⁹⁶ Isa 66,24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

⁹⁷ Gen 1,27 God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them.

⁹⁸ Isa 54,10 Though the mountains leave their place and the hills be shaken, My love shall never leave you nor my covenant of peace be shaken, says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

⁹⁹ Rev 12,11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

¹⁰⁰ Rev 21,2 I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

¹⁰¹ Rev 21,9b "Come here. I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

¹⁰² Jud 1,14-16 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaks great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

¹⁰³ Tit 1,16 They claim to know God, but by their deeds they deny him. They are vile and disobedient and unqualified for any good deed.

¹⁰⁴ Eph 2,1-3 You were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you once lived following the age of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the desires of our flesh, following the wishes of the flesh and the impulses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest.

¹⁰⁵ Mt 25,41 Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

¹⁰⁶ 2.Petr 3,17 Therefore, beloved, since you are forewarned, be on your guard not to be led into the error of the unprincipled and to fall from your own stability.

¹⁰⁷ Mt 5,36 Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black.

¹⁰⁸ Mt 6,27 Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span?

¹⁰⁹ Lk 2,35 and you yourself a sword will pierce so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

¹¹⁰ Mt 12,36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will render an account for every careless word they speak.

¹¹¹ Ecc 12,13 The last word, when all is heard: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is man's all; because God will bring to judgment every work, with all its hidden qualities, whether good or bad.

¹¹² Prov 1,7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; wisdom and instruction fools despise.

Judgment¹¹³ be the most important appointment in our lives, for which we prepare ourselves¹¹⁴? Is there anything so helpful in keeping our ways pure¹¹⁵ before the Lord than the fear of God?¹¹⁶

The Great White Throne

The throne was brilliant and white, but the one on the throne was radiating a type of light which greatly surpassed that of the sun. The earth, the stars and even heaven itself fled before his presence. All matter, the whole universe, burned at an unimaginable temperature and then ceased to exist.

[And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. Rev 20,11](#)

The throne room was huge, filled with the glory of God, with the Seraphim, the Cherubim, and uncountable myriads of angels.

[And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened Rev 20,12a](#)

The day of Judgement had arrived and all people throughout all times were gathered into this most extraordinary room. All of the dead, both small and great, rich and poor, were now standing before the throne, awaiting their eternal judgment. Myriads of huge books could be seen, and all people knew that their names and their deeds were recorded in these books.

Not far from the throne room was the lake of fire. As the earth had been destroyed, the devil had been taken and thrown into the lake. This is the lake where nobody will ever return, where the torment will never cease. Was not this sea of fire and brimstone created by the Almighty in the fullness of his wrath? Could there be any place which the creator of the universe could have made where the torment could have been worse?

[And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Rev 20,10](#)

Who could even imagine the degree of torment the devil was now suffering? Even a split second in this hottest of all furnaces was unimaginable! Yet the beast and false prophet had already been there a thousand years! Never will they tell of the degree of torment they suffer, nor anyone else who is accursed of the Father and destined to eternal torment. This is that lake from which nobody will ever return.

[Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Mt 25,41b](#)

The pending judgment had a degree of earnestness that could not be known on the earth. Many were forced to silence as they started crying out in despair, knowing they had ignored the warnings of this day while on the earth. How many had even heard the words of the Son of God, and yet had not heeded to them!

¹¹³ 2.Petr 3,7 The present heavens and earth have been reserved by the same word for fire, kept for the day of judgment and of destruction of the godless.

¹¹⁴ Mk 13,36-37 May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!'

¹¹⁵ Ps 19,10a The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever.

¹¹⁶ Prov 16,6b and by the fear of the LORD man avoids evil.

Even before the judgment of the nations began, the angels belonging to the devil were gathered. The screeching voices were not headed, their pleading and cursing ignored. Billions of the most hideous creatures, which had once been so glorious and beautiful, so brilliant as the angels, were cast into the eternal oven. Their judgment had already taken place a thousand times over as they had attacked the saints while they were living on the earth¹¹⁷. There was no pity shown them, yet nobody could even estimate the degree of the eternal pain awaiting them.

[No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their due reward from Me, saith the LORD. Isa 54,17 Jewish Publication Society](#)

Hell, the hideous waiting place, full of torment for the damned, was emptied and then thrown into the huge lake of fire. Also death itself, which never existed until the fall of the Angels, and which had been created to judge all who would sin, had no more purpose and was thrown into the lake, never to be seen again.

[Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. Rev 20,14](#)

Even the torment of hades was nothing in comparison to the lake of fire. All of the dead who had been confined in its depths, some who had been waiting in great agony for thousands of years, were now relieved of their torment for the duration of their eternal judgment. They all knew of their eternal fate, but many still considered themselves innocent. Now the time had arrived where everything would be brought into light, where they had their personal appointment with the one sitting on the white throne. They were extremely grateful for the temporary relief, yet at the same time they suffered under great despair, knowing that the lake of fire was awaiting them.

Even before the judgment began there were many saints who were brought before the Great Throne¹¹⁸. The reward they received was unfathomable, destined to shine in brilliance as the sun for all eternity.

[Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear. Mt 13,43](#)

The Father himself cried out in pleasure towards them, who had overcome in the hardest of temptations. For a good amount of time they became the spectacle of honour. This honour can not be compared to anything anyone has ever imagined. And they came and sat down with Jesus on his throne. This was the wife, the saints who had partaken in the first resurrection.

[Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over these; they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for \(the\) thousand years. Rev 20,6](#)

At the beginning of the thousand years they had already risen in the first resurrection. They were those who had washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and who had already been

¹¹⁷ 1.Cor 6,3a Do you not know that we will judge angels?

¹¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Jn 3,18

betrothed to Jesus a thousand years earlier. Even on the earth they had ruled with him, for she was the wife, the betrothed bride of Christ.

[And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them.' Dan 7,27 Jewish Publication Society](#)

Before all of the angels, before all men of all times, she was led to the side of Jesus on the Great White throne. And with joy untold, with victory over victory, it was proclaimed to all people of all generations that she had overcome the devil and all of his forces. She sacrificed her life for Jesus, she held faithful to him even when facing the most hideous torments and martyrdom. Even the word Glory cannot tell the honour the Father showed her. Although on the earth she was so abase and so contrite and despised, in her resurrection she had been dressed with immortality and beauty above any other creature! And as she sat beside Jesus on his throne you could see that nothing was missing in her beauty that could say she was even less than the Almighty if it wasn't her total obedience to Jesus and endless love and submission.

How the angels cried as they saw their eternal King together with his brilliant Queen sitting on the throne of Majesty, the Great White throne. All dominions, even the angels of great glory, will serve and obey them.

As the wife took her place beside her beloved, the LORD showed to all in the room a glimpse of her beauty. Saints throughout the ages were exposed in their martyrdom, their last words of love to Jesus before they parted from the earth rang through the complete court! For just a second there were hundreds of millions of saints exposed in their love for Jesus, where they gladly sacrificed their lives, in total confidence of their eternal reward. And they had overcome the devil and all his angels. Even if there were ten thousand times as many demons, they would have overcome, there was nothing which could have overcome her love for Jesus.

[He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. Rev 3,21](#)

And the honour of the wife seemed to never end as she received her reward.

[Do not be afraid of anything that you are going to suffer. Indeed, the devil will throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will face an ordeal for ten days. Remain faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. Whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The victor shall not be harmed by the second death.' Rev 2,11](#)

There was one very special crown, which was in beauty no less than that crown which Jesus was wearing. It sparkled with unlimited precious shining jewels and was known to all in the court as the crown of life. This was brought to her by the cherubim and angels as they showed towards her the greatest homage. She had not even a trace of arrogance, her love had been perfected. There was nothing you could give her which could even compare to what she had already received, to live for eternity at the side of her beloved. She had no fear in judgment, she had overcome and would not be harmed by the second death.

[To the victor, who keeps to my ways until the end, I will give authority over the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. Like clay vessels will they be smashed, just as I received authority from my Father. And to him I will give the morning star. Whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Rev 2,26-27](#)

Just as she had been given authority with Jesus over the nations, she would now rule together with him on his throne for eternity. And just as she had ruled the nations with a rod of Iron, she was given together with Jesus the judgment of all the nations.

How grieved were so many billions who had been offered in great love by Jesus himself this untold honour and had traded it for the honour of man! How blind and foolish they had lived, scorning the riches of Christ and holding to the base things of the earth. Even owning the whole earth could not be compared with a splinter of the eternal inheritance of the saints.

The more the wife was exalted, the greater the remorse from all who stood before the throne. In this court room reproach for the name of Jesus was worth more than all the wealth the earth.

[The victor will thus be dressed in white, and I will never erase his name from the book of life but will acknowledge his name in the presence of my Father and of his angels. Rev 3,5](#)

The time had come for the wife, dressed in radiant white, in brightness like the sun, to be acknowledged by Jesus in the presence of his Father and of his angels. As he rose, every knee bowed before him and every tongue confessed him as LORD, even those who had been brought out of the depths of hell and had hated him while on the earth.

Rising from the Great White throne he approaches his Father, the Almighty God; his greatness incapable of being understood by any created being. Even the Cherubim, created with great eyes in absorbing a minute spectacle of his majesty, could not express even the least of what they saw, but simply cried 'Holy, Holy, Holy'. Before his Father and the holy angels Jesus begins proclaiming his unlimited love for his wife. 'She loves me more than she loves herself. She sacrificed all for my sake. She confessed me, though it cost her life. She bore with me my suffering, my heartache, my hopes and desires and gave herself completely for my kingdom. She is my wife. Whoever received her on the earth received me, whoever did not listen to her did not listen to me. She shall sit with me and be my counsellor as I judge the earth, for she is worthy.'

What great fear came upon many of those before the throne, who had spoken against her on the earth. How certain were so many of their rightful damnation as every thought came in remembrance of how they had treated his bride on the earth.

[Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." Mt 25,44-46](#)

Every word spoken against the saints on the earth was by itself enough to bring eternal damnation. Billions now understood why they had been confined to hell, reserved for this day to receive their just sentence.

[The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness Matt 13,41](#)

How many had been instruments of the devil in his attacks against the saints! How many attempted to seduce them! What a great judgment was now pending! How others spread rumours of slander about them. Every word spoken would now be reviewed before the Great White throne. How others tried to prevent her in hundreds of different ways in her service to Jesus. Damned husbands had tried forbidding their believing wives from going to church or

reaching out with the gospel. Others had despised the saints, resisting their words. Still others had physically abused them. There were also those who had resisted her message of salvation, trying to keep others from becoming disciples of Jesus.

Until this time there was a large group of the dead who still thought that the LORD had unjustly judged them. Many of them were Jewish and Christian leaders who had lived their lives diligently hearkening to the words of the Holy Scriptures. They could not understand why the LORD had been so very angry with them. Some of them pleaded that the LORD would look one more time in the Book of Life, if maybe their names were written there and had been overseen.

This was the time when everything was to come to the light. In great patience Jesus accepted their plea. They were brought to the front and were able to look with him into the Book of Life. How brilliant were those names that they saw. Even the handwriting of their names in this book reflected a little of the untold honour bestowed on them. Their names were searched for, but not found. They then answered, 'We gave ourselves for your church on the earth! Why are our names not there?' He replied, 'Why do you think your names should be here?' They answered, 'We were baptized in your name!'

A question of great importance to all in the room had been brought up before the Great White throne. Now had come the time when every secret would be revealed; every hidden thing exposed. Jesus, still speaking gently with them, answered and said, 'When were you baptized?' They answered, 'Shortly after we were born'.

Jesus answered, 'Do you really expect me to accept your baptism?' And throughout all of the court came a great revelation concerning baptism. And the Lord looked towards his wife, who on the earth was his bride. Everyone heard countless oaths of allegiance and faithfulness to Jesus as their LORD spoken by the saints. Their faithfulness to their baptismal oath brought them the honour they had now received. And upon their oaths they went into the water and sacrificed their lives for Jesus.

The revelation continued. As they made this oath, their hearts became one with Jesus, they became members of his body on the earth, with Jesus as their head. As they went into the water all of their sins were taken from them and placed upon Jesus. His love for them cries out in all eternity as he showed himself in the room as the Lamb sacrificed for their sins. As they were baptized, they received the atonement, the forgiveness of their sins.

The revelation continued. As they came out of the water, they had been united with Jesus in his resurrection. They were new creatures, of the same nature as Jesus himself, conformed to his image. As the revelation continued, the whole group understood that Jesus had broken the wall of the enemy's camp and through baptism his saints were born into the kingdom of heaven, even before their death. They had been seated even during the rest of their lives together with Jesus.^{xiii}

Still, some contended that their baptisms were valid! Was that not the teaching they had received as they were upon the earth, from his very church?

The revelation continued. The LORD was now there to answer all of their questions. He showed them the war that the devil and his angels had waged against the church. One of their greatest attacks was against the gate leading out of their kingdom. They were determined that this gate be destroyed. Countless attacks in different forms, various deceptive devices were all developed trying to keep the people in their dark kingdom. And one of the greatest victories was obtained

as the church yielded to their deception of baptizing infants. They were thereby able to create a new baptism, a baptism which did not lead outside of their kingdom, but could be performed within it.

The revelation continued. This devilish plot was not only to deceive people into thinking they were Christians, but was also to hinder the true Christians. For those committed to preaching the gospel and baptizing those that believed, this device was developed to stop them and make them become outcasts to the rest of the church. They would be Anabaptists and be persecuted by the church themselves. The leaders accepting the baptism of infants would thereby become themselves enemies of the evangelists and guards at the gates of baptism. They would do anything possible to prevent anyone from passing through the gate to eternal life.

How deep was the disgrace of these who thought they were Christians, but had never entered through baptism the gates of the kingdom of God! How victorious had Satan been against those of the church who were not totally obedient to Jesus, who did not hold to his word and yielded to the traditions! Then the words of Jesus, which he spoke while on the earth, were spoken in their full revelation before the throne.

[Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it. Mt 13,45-36](#)

Everyone now understood this parable. Anything less than selling all for Jesus was shameful and a great offence to the truth. And the wife spoke out from his side: 'Anyone who would do less didn't really ever even meet Jesus in his love!' The wife herself proclaimed, 'Anyone who loved Father or Mother, Son or Child, Husband or Wife or even their own life more than Jesus is not worthy of being at his side!' And it was clear to all. Those who really loved Jesus did not regard those who were at the gate trying to prevent them from being baptized.

How many church leaders and people who were active in the church realized that they had been deceived by the enemy! Baptism was the most important of all of the commands of Jesus, for it was in baptism that sinners were cleansed. It was in baptism that they received the atonement. It was in baptism that they became members of the church, his beloved bride. Anyone not totally wishing for people to be baptized as Jesus had commanded was standing against the kingdom of God coming to the earth.

There were still others, who themselves thought that they had also been overseen. They had been baptized, but instead of being dipped in the water they had only received water poured or sprinkled on their head. Again Jesus took the time to explain everything. As the book was examined, their names were not found in the book of life. It seemed like the whole crowd gathered before the throne could not understand why the form of baptism would be so decisive in the eternal judgment.

Again a revelation came of the attacks of the enemy against the church. Even from the very beginning there were the attacks against the form of baptism^{xiii}. Jesus started his explanation by showing the pain of circumcision, the first covenant he had made with the Jews. How painful were the three days and how many people were deterred from becoming Jews because of the agony of circumcision. There was then many who did not want to go through this agony and tried to change its form. As the other Jews questioned them, they said that they were circumcised. However as it was more closely examined, it was discovered that the piece of flesh had not been removed from their foreskins. The Jews then rejected their attempts to change the

method by which they were circumcised. It was clear to all, the method of circumcision was decisive, and any variations would cancel its validity.

Then Jesus said to those who were contending with him: 'Why did you not try to protect the method by which sinners enter my eternal covenant? Why did you despise my words and the words of my apostles? Why did you not believe me and hold to my words?'

Everyone then understood. By changing the form of baptism a counterfeit gate had been built in the camp of the enemy by which even sincere people had been deceived. An even more deceptive barrier had been built to prevent people from escaping! A revelation came to everyone present that the most deadly deception of the enemy is mixed with the truth. And Jesus, who is the truth, said, 'Truth cannot be mixed with even the smallest amount of deception. Otherwise it is even a more deadly deception.' How blessed were those who had heeded the words of Jesus on the earth and did them! There were no commands Jesus emphasized in heaven more than those concerning baptism, for through baptism he had ordained that sinners would receive his atonement.

God was now revealing everything to all people. The unfathomable plan which God had, even before the foundation of the world¹¹⁹, was now revealed¹²⁰. Everything fit together, all the laws given to Moses¹²¹, all the words of the prophets¹²², everything was understood and there were no more secrets¹²³. Everything was laid open before those standing before the throne.

Before Jesus commenced with the judgment, the Father of Glory spoke to the congregation. Now that all things had come to an end, every mystery was to be answered, ever secret closely examined. He told all gathered that it was his choice that sin would enter the world¹²⁴. Revelation came from his words and everyone understood. He also said it was his wish to prepare a bride for his son, the bridegroom¹²⁵, who would love him with all her heart, and this would otherwise have not been possible. Heaven had been prepared for those that loved him¹²⁶, that they might dwell there in the light¹²⁷ of His glory¹²⁸. Then he proceeded to say that all had sinned¹²⁹, and nobody would be permitted to enter this city¹³⁰ who committed sin¹³¹, who did not obey his law.

¹¹⁹ Eph 1,4 According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love

¹²⁰ Lk 12,2 There is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known.

¹²¹ Mt 5,18 Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place.

¹²² Isa 34,16 Look in the book of the LORD and read: No one of these shall be lacking, For the mouth of the LORD has ordered it, and his spirit shall gather them there.

¹²³ Deut 29:29 The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

¹²⁴ Rom 5,12 Therefore, just as through one person sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and thus death came to all, inasmuch as all sinned

¹²⁵ Mt 25,1 Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

¹²⁶ Ps 69,36 The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein.

¹²⁷ Rev 21,23 The city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gave it light, and its lamp was the Lamb.

¹²⁸ 1.Cor 2,9 But as it is written: "What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him,"

¹²⁹ Rom 3,23 all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God.

¹³⁰ Rev 21,27 but nothing unclean will enter it, nor any (one) who does abominable things or tells lies. Only those will enter whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

¹³¹ 1.Joh 3,6 No one who remains in him sins; no one who sins has seen him or known him.

He pauses a short instance, and all people recognize their guilt before God. An unfathomable remorse strikes the billions, regretting sorely how they had lived.

As he said this, the importance of the atonement became immense! It was clear that it would be based upon entering the eternal covenant by baptism! The water of baptism separated the bride from the corruption of the world. It was here that the saints made their declaration to follow Jesus as LORD.

As I watched, Thrones were set up and the Ancient One took his throne. His clothing was snow bright, and the hair on his head as white as wool; His throne was flames of fire, with wheels of burning fire. A surging stream of fire flowed out from where he sat; Thousands upon thousands were ministering to him, and myriads upon myriads attended him. The court was convened, and the books were opened. Dan 7,9-10

The Father started the court. The books were all now before him. And then Jesus rose up from his Great White throne and his wife beside him.

As the visions during the night continued, I saw One like a son of man coming, on the clouds of heaven; When he reached the Ancient One and was presented before him, Dan 7,13

The Father then said to all before him, 'I have given all judgment to my Son'. How surprised were many of those who were Jews on the earth! Even the most sincere Muslims understood how in their zeal for God they had utterly despised the Son! Then the Father repeated his words, 'I have committed all judgment into his hands, that all would reverence my Son just as they reverence me.' And then the words of Jesus spoken on the earth were heard in the courts.

Nor does the Father judge anyone, but he has given all judgment to his Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Joh 5,22-23

It was now too late! What hypocrisy as people of all nations had worshipped God but had refused the gospel message of the death of Jesus. Having rejected Jesus, how far they were from honoring the Father!

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. Rev 22,12

The billions before the throne knew that everything about their lives was written in these books. Even so much that they had long forgotten was all preserved, and every word written in this book was true. Their eternal sentence will be based upon the truth of how they lived their lives, their every deed and every word, as recorded in these books.

I tell you, on the Day of Judgment people will render an account for every careless word they speak. By your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." Mt 12,36-37

How certain was the damnation of all who committed fornication or adultery! How great was the anger of the LORD against all liars. How merciless did the LORD show himself against those who

showed no mercy. And how exact did Jesus follow the words which he spoke upon the earth¹³², with the Father in total consent in his Judgment. Who could compare with the faithfulness of the Son in fulfilling the will of his Father, even in the Day of Judgment?

[If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions. Mt 6,14-15](#)

All deeds were seen before the light of God. Every small evil appeared a thousand times more evil as Jesus and the angels examined the lives of those standing before him. Yet each of these persons Jesus had loved. How dearly did he invite them to come! And yet how obstinate were they in their rejection! His heart was broken towards so many he had loved so much. How often you could hear him saying, 'why did you not listen?' There was nothing more clear, coming from the mouth of him who himself was the truth. Those who loved Jesus did what he said. Those who did not love Jesus did not do what he said. His love for them was so evident, even though he knew that he must order that they be thrown eternity into the lake of fire.

[But when the king came in to meet the guests he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment. He said to him, 'My friend, how is it that you came in here without a wedding garment?' But he was reduced to silence. Then the king said to his attendants, 'Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.' Mt 22,11-13](#)

And so did the judgment continue. Countless knew of his great love for them as revealed in their lives. How often did he heal them, even though they were his enemies! How well did he provide for them work, a warm home, everything they could wish! Yet they had no interest in losing their lives for the gospel. They had no interest in confessing him before the others! And they were more interested in fulfilling their own wishes as to sacrifice their lives for his church, his kingdom. How many had the bible sitting in their homes and never even wanted to hear his words!

These were the damned, the accursed of the Father.

[They are like wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shameless deeds, wandering stars for whom the gloom of darkness has been reserved forever. Jud 1,13](#)

There were many others who still had their doubts concerning their fate. These were those who had been baptized, they had been filled with the Holy Spirit and born again, and still they were found amongst the damned. Why?

Their discontentment could be heard by those around the throne. 'We gave our lives to you, Jesus! We went to church regularly. We even preached the gospel!

What they said was true as their lives were examined. Some of them had even cast out demons in his name. Others were used by him to heal sick people. And they proclaimed his name to the people of the nations. For what reason did he remove their names from the book of life?

All were listening content as Jesus answered them. 'What was the oath that you made when you were baptized?' The answered, 'We swore allegiance to you. Under oath we received you as Lord of our lives'.

¹³² Joh 12,48 Whoever rejects me and does not accept my words has something to judge him: the word that I spoke, it will condemn him on the last day,

Jesus replied, 'You have answered well. Have you still not understood what it means to have me as Lord of your lives? Was I in all truth Lord of your lives? Did you really serve me as my saints?'

[Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not drive out demons in your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in your name? Mt 7,21-22](#)

The voice of the wife could then be heard, 'You, Almighty God, do we serve, and you alone!' And it was revealed that all religious activities of all types had no value whatsoever before the throne of God. There was only one thing that mattered; did we do what Jesus told us to do? And Jesus then answered them, 'Why did you do so many things, but didn't do what I commanded you? Why did you not do the will of my Father? I sent you the Holy Spirit? Why were you not led by Him¹³³? You started so well, why did you let yourselves be deceived by the honour of man? Why did you let the motives of your heart be touched by the enemy?

[My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. Joh 10,27-28](#)

As the judgment continued, there was no doubt; nobody would be justified by the deeds written in the books. Yet still the love that Jesus had gave every person a fair trial. How amazing was his love for them. And yet how wretched were their lives in the light of God. There was nothing more condemning than having refused Jesus and his salvation. And how many countless opportunities did he give so many! Yet they abhorred his grace.

For the age of sin following the resurrection, there was only one way to have your name written into the book of life. Every true Christian was charged with this same command, to preach it throughout the world.

[He said to them, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. Mk 16,15-16](#)

Those who believed the gospel and were baptized were written in the book of life. The names of those who kept their oath to follow Jesus as their LORD were not removed from this book, but they were his glorious wife.

[And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Rev 20,15](#)

¹³³ Rom 8,14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

CONCLUSION

Becoming a member of the church by anything other than baptism is then not the church. It may be a Christian club or a Christian organization we become a member of, but in Christ's church there is only one entrance, the laver.

As I mentioned earlier, the chapter concerning eternal judgment is only fictional. The words of Jesus or the activities which occur on this day are just fathoms of the imagination. I'm certain that this day will come and I wish that you be prepared. I am just as certain that it will be completely different as what I have written.

THE WRITINGS OF THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

ⁱ This writing is based upon the Holy Scriptures, accrediting to these Scriptures the authority of God.

There are two other sources which have also been drawn upon, the Early Church Fathers and the Oral Law of the Jews, known as the Mishnah.

Some of the views expressed in this writing are shared by many of the early church fathers. Because they lived shortly after the apostles it is of great benefit that we might also through their writings profit from how they understood the scriptures. Therefore all writings not belonging to the scriptures are expressed only in end notes. I am fully aware of the danger which may arise, that some of the things they write are erroneous. Their writings are in no way to be compared to the Word of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. They at most may be complimentary to many of the things revealed in the Scriptures and help us understand how the early church interpreted many of the truths of the Word of God.

Most of the references were taken from the earliest writings, not long after the churches had been established. The propose for this is because the closer the writings were to the time the scriptures were written, the more likely their interpretation represents what the apostles intended to be understood. For example, Justin and Ignatius were leaders in the churches which the apostles had established and would therefore express the views which these churches had towards the scriptures.

The other source known as the oral law, has always been known by the Jewish people parallel to the first 5 books of Moses, but were orally transferred from generation to generation. Their source is also based directly upon the revelation given by God to Moses. As the destruction of the temple occurred in 70 C.E. these oral laws were written down to prevent them from being lost in the dispersion. A complete version of the oral law was reacted in about 200 CE by Yehudah Ha-Nasi and given the name Mishnah.

The oral laws were given the same time as the Torah, but were not written in the Torah,. They elucidate many of the priestly activities of how the Torah was practiced. These laws were the basis for the practical application of the laws of agriculture (Zeraim), the festivals (Moed), marriage and divorce (Nashim), criminality (Nezikin), sacrificial rites (Kodashim) and Purities.

ⁱⁱ God's creations on the fifth day in the waters.

Theophilus of Antioch saw the creation coming forth out of the waters on the fifth day prophetic, being a sign of God's destiny for man, that he would receive repentance and remission of sins through the water and laver of regeneration (baptism).

[Theophilus of Antioch Book 2, CHAP. XVI.--OF THE FIFTH DAY. \(180 C.E.\)](#)

[On the fifth day the living creatures which proceed from the waters were produced, through: which also is revealed the manifold wisdom of God in these things; for who could count their multitude and very various kinds? Moreover, the things proceeding from the waters were blessed by God, that this also might be a sign of men's being destined to receive repentance and remission of sins, through the water and laver of regeneration,--as many as come to the truth, and are born again, and receive blessing from God.](#)

iii The New Creation after the Fall.

As Adam sinned, both he and his offspring were cursed with death, something the angels had never known. Yet even in this curse, he opened the door to a new type, a creature even higher than Adam! Is anyone in Christ, he is a new creature. He is created anew in the image of his creator. As we receive the remission of sins in baptism, God recreates us to be a new type. Even old men will be renewed in this new creation to have the soul of children.

Barnabas (120 C.E.) 6,11,14

Forasmuch then as He renewed us in the remission of sins, He made us to be a new type, so that we should have the soul of children, as if He were recreating us.

Behold then we have been created anew, as He saith again in another prophet; Behold, saith the Lord, I will take out from these, that is to say, from those whom the Spirit of the Lord foresaw, their stony hearts, and will put into them hearts of flesh; for He Himself was to be manifested in the flesh and to dwell in us.

iv The birth of a new creation comes out of the water.

Clemens makes a comparison of us being reborn through the water of baptism with the creation of the world, which came forth out of water.

Clemens Alexandria Stromata Book 3,88

He thus wishes us to turn ourselves again and become as children who have come to know the true Father and are reborn through water by a generation different from birth in the created world.

v The Betrothal of the Church to Christ

Some of the Early Church Fathers expounded on the relationship of Christ and the Church as being similar to marriage, as between Adam and Eve. In this union, the woman came forth from the suffering of Jesus on the cross, from Christ's side.

Methodius (290 C.E.) , Discourse III – Thaleia, Chapter 8

Whence it was that the apostle directly referred to Christ the words which had been spoken of Adam. For thus will it be most certainly agreed that the Church is formed out of His bones and flesh; and it was for this cause that the Word, leaving His Father in heaven, came down to be "joined to His wife;" and slept in the trance of His passion, and willingly suffered death for her, that He might present the Church to Himself glorious and blameless, having cleansed her by the laver, for the receiving of the spiritual and blessed seed, which is sown by Him who with whispers implants it in the depths of the mind; and is conceived and formed by the Church, as by a woman. so as to give birth and nourishment to virtue. For in this way, too, the command, "Increase and multiply," is duly fulfilled, the Church increasing daily in greatness and beauty and multitude, by the union and communion of the Word who now still comes down to us and falls into a trance by the memorial of His passion; for otherwise the Church could not conceive believers, and give them new birth by the laver of regeneration, unless Christ, emptying Himself

for their sake, that He might be contained by them, as I said, through the recapitulation of His passion, should die again, coming down from heaven, and being “joined to His wife,” the Church, should provide for a certain power being taken from His own side, so that all who are built up in Him should grow up, even those who are born again by the laver, receiving of His bones and of His flesh, that is, of His holiness and of His glory.

^{vi} The Laver

The laver at the entrance of the tent foreshadows baptism as entrance to the church, where we are cleansed from our sins. Many of the church fathers even used the word ‘laver’ in the place of the word baptism when describing the act of cleansing which happens in the waters of baptism.

Justin Martyr (150 C.E.) First Apology, Chapter 61

And for this [rite] we have learned from the apostles this reason. Since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training; in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe; he who leads to the laver the person that is to be washed calling him by this name alone.

In the laver of baptism we are washed and obtain in its water the remission of our sins.

Justin Martyr (150 C.E.) Dialog Trypho Chapter 14

“By reason, therefore, of this laver of repentance and knowledge of God, which has been ordained on account of the transgression of God’s people, as Isaiah cries, we have believed, and testify that that very baptism which he announced is alone able to purify those who have repented; and this is the water of life.

Justin gives baptism alone the ability to purify and atone for sin. In this context he rightly calls the water of baptism ‘the water of life’.

Tertullian (200 C.E.) The Shows Chapter 4

If, therefore, it shall be made plain that the entire apparatus of the shows is based upon idolatry, beyond all doubt that will carry with it the conclusion that our renunciatory testimony in the laver of baptism has reference to the shows, which, through their idolatry, have been given over to the devil, and his pomp, and his angels...If any of these shall be found to have had no connection with an idol-god, it will be held as free at once from the taint of idolatry, and as not coming within the range of our baptismal abjuration.

In the laver of baptism we denounce the devil, and we need to continue to live in a way as to renounce him from entering into our lives after we make our renunciatory testimony. Watching shows can be compared today with watching video films or sports, where Christians place more importance on watching such programs than on their priestly function as priests in prayer for the lost world.

Tertullian (200 C.E.) Against Marcion Book 4, Chapter 13

Now, the same number of apostles was thus portended, as if they were to be fountains and rivers which should water the Gentile world, which was formerly dry and destitute of knowledge (as He says by Isaiah: "I will put streams in the unwatered ground"); as if they were to be gems to shed lustre upon the church's sacred robe, which Christ, the High Priest of the Father, puts on; as if, also, they were to be stones massive in their faith, which the true Joshua took out of the laver of the Jordan, and placed in the sanctuary of His covenant.

Jesus is the true Joshua, who took out of the Jordan laver (the baptism of John) massive stones of faith, such as Peter, Andrew, Phillip and Nathanael (Bartholomew), not to mention many other disciples of John who later became disciples of Jesus.

Tertullian (200 C.E.) On modesty, Chapter 18

For these are the deliberate judgments of Christ, "loving the Church," who "hath delivered Him self up for her, that He may sanctify her (purifying her utterly by the laver of water) in the word, that He may present the Church to Him self glorious, not having stain or wrinkle"—of course after the laver—"but (that) she may be holy and without reproach;

How important it is that we walk in a worthy way after we are purified by the laver! Are we not called to the side of Christ as his Church, not having stain or wrinkle?

Clemens of Alexandria To Heathen Chapter 10

Ye that thirst, come to the water; and ye that have no money, come, and buy and drink without money. He invites to the laver, to salvation, to illumination,...

Shouldn't everyone want to accept this invitation to the laver? Does not the Word of God make so many promises to those who enter this laver?

Irenaeus Against Heresies Book 3 Chapter 17

For our bodies have received unity among themselves by means of that laver which leads to incorruption; but our souls, by means of the Spirit. Wherefore both are necessary, since both contribute towards the life of God...

The pathway to incorruption is lead by the Spirit through the waters of the laver. We cannot go around this requirement, for both (the Spirit and baptism) are necessities for those to inherit God's life.

Hippolytus (220 C.E) On Susannah

What fit time but that of the passover, at which the laver is prepared in the garden for those who burn, and Susannah washes herself, and is presented as a pure bride to God? "With two maids only." For when the Church desires to take the laver according to use, she must of necessity have two handmaids to accompany her. For it is by faith on Christ and love to God that the Church confesses and receives the laver. "And she said to her maids, Bring me oil." For faith and love prepare oil and unguents to those who are washed. But what were these unguents, but the commandments of the holy Word? And what was the oil, but the power of the Holy Spirit, with which believers are anointed as with ointment after the laver of washing?

The laver separates those who are to burn from those who are to be the pure bride. Those who are to receive the laver confess their faith and love to God. Once washed by the laver we receive the power of the Holy Spirit, as many of the cleansings in the laver were followed by anointing with oil.

Cyprian (220 C.E.) Epistle 1 (talking about his conversion)

While I was still lying in darkness and gloomy night, wavering hither and thither, tossed about on the foam of this boastful age, and uncertain of my wandering steps, knowing nothing of my real life, and remote from truth and light, I used to regard it as a difficult matter, and especially as difficult in respect of my character at that time, that a man should be capable of being born again—a truth which the divine mercy had announced for my salvation,—and that a man quickened to a new life in the laver of saving water should be able to put off what he had previously been; and, although retaining all his bodily structure, should be himself changed in heart and soul.

Cyprian accredits to the laver both a new life and his salvation. He also accredits it to putting off his old identity, who we previously had been.

Cyprian (220 C.E.) Epistle 72

...and thenceforward until the present day, so many thousands of heretics in our provinces have been converted to the Church, and have neither despised nor delayed, nay, they have both reasonably and gladly embraced, the opportunity to attain the grace of the life-giving laver and of saving baptism.

vii **Washing with Water**

Many of the washing commandments were signifying the washing of our sins and guilt which takes place in baptism. The early Christian fathers referred to this washing countless times.

Justin Martyr Dialog Trypho Chapter 13

For Isaiah did not send you to a bath, there to wash away murder and other sins, which not even all the water of the sea were sufficient to purge; but, as might have been expected, this was that saving bath which he mentioned and which was for those who repented (Otto translation).

Justin Martyr Dialog Trypho Chapter 18

For since you have read, O Trypho, as you yourself admitted, the doctrines taught by our Saviour, I do not think that I have done foolishly in adding some short utterances of His to the prophetic statements. Wash therefore, and be now clean, and put away iniquity from your souls, as God bids you be washed in this laver, and be circumcised with the true circumcision.

Clement of Alexandria (190 C.E.) The Instructor, Chapter 6

But He is perfected by the washing—of baptism—alone, and is sanctified by the descent of the Spirit? Such is the case. The same also takes place in our case, whose exemplar Christ became. Being baptized, we are illuminated; illuminated, we become sons; being made sons, we are made perfect; being made perfect, we are made immortal. “I,” says He, “have said that ye are gods, and

all sons of the Highest.” This work is variously called grace, and illumination, and perfection, and washing: washing, by which we cleanse away our sins; grace, by which the penalties accruing to transgressions are remitted; and illumination, by which that holy light of salvation is beheld, that is, by which we see God clearly.

viii **The Red Heifer – The Crucifixion Scene**

The Law showed in its shadow many different prophetic scenes, but none so often as the scene of the crucifixion. The Early Church Fathers spoke often concerning the red heifer as foretelling certain incidents which happened at the crucifixion as well as explaining its purpose.

Epistle of , (C.E. 120) Chapter 8

Now what do you suppose this to be a type of, that a command was given to Israel, that men of the greatest wickedness should offer a heifer, and slay and burn it, and, that then boys should take the ashes, and put these into vessels, and bind round a stick purple wool along with hyssop, and that thus the boys should sprinkle the people, one by one, in order that they might be purified from their sins? Consider how He speaks to you with simplicity. The calf is Jesus: the sinful men offering it are those who led Him to the slaughter. But now the men are no longer guilty, are no longer regarded as sinners. And the boys that sprinkle are those that have proclaimed to us the remission of sins and purification of heart. To these He gave authority to preach the Gospel, being twelve in number, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel. But why are there three boys that sprinkle? To correspond to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, because these were great with God. And why was the wool [placed] upon the wood? Because by wood Jesus holds His kingdom, so that [through the cross] those believing on Him shall live for ever. But why was hyssop joined with the wool? Because in His kingdom the days will be evil and polluted in which we shall be saved, [and] because he who suffers in body is cured through the cleansing efficacy of hyssop. And on this account the things which stand thus are clear to us, but obscure to them because they did not hear the voice of the Lord.

ix **Believing in His Death when Baptized**

A very vital foundation of Baptism is the faith on what Jesus accomplished in his death. Everywhere the gospel is preached, the good news about his atoning death for us is made known. For anyone who desires to make their life right with God, this is the only answer. This is the pearl of great price, where one sells everything, that he might have this pearl.

If someone has another motive for being baptized, then we need to discern this and prevent them. Otherwise, like taking communion unworthily, that which usually brings the unspeakable blessing of eternal life will instead bring judgment and death. By being baptized unworthily we might even close the door to eternal life and thereby prevent for ourselves ever receiving baptism as Jesus ordained it should be, where the Spirit of God instigates it and we are born of the Spirit.

Here are some of the earliest writings of the Early Church Fathers where the importance of faith in his death when being baptized is stressed.

1 Clement (100 C.E.) Chapter 8

Wherefore also, ye appear to me to live not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ, who died for us, in order that, by believing in His death, ye may by baptism be made partakers of His resurrection.

^x Finding the Cross in the Water of Baptism

Many of the Early Church writings talk about finding the cross in the water. One of the very first ones is in Barnabas. When being baptized, we have hope on receiving the atonement of our sins, which was accomplished by Jesus on the cross.

Barnabas (120 C.E.) 11:8

Ye perceive how He pointed out the water and the cross at the same time. For this is the meaning; Blessed are they that set their hope on the cross, and go down into the water; for He speaketh of the reward at his proper season; then, saith He, I will repay. But now what saith He? His leaves shall not fall off; He meaneth by this that every word, which shall come forth from you through your mouth in faith and love, shall be for the conversion and hope of many.

Barnabas 11:11

This He saith, because we go down into the water laden with sins and filth, and rise up from it bearing fruit in the heart, resting our fear and hope on Jesus in the spirit. And whosoever shall eat of these shall live forever; He meaneth this; whosoever, saith He, shall hear these things spoken and shall believe, shall live forever.

Barnabas 16:8b-9

Give heed then that the temple of the Lord may be built gloriously. How? Understand ye. By receiving the remission of our sins and hoping on the Name we became new, created afresh from the beginning. Wherefore God dwelleth truly in our habitation within us. How? The word of his faith, the calling of his promise, the wisdom of the ordinances, the commandments of the teaching, He Himself prophesying in us, He Himself dwelling in us, opening for us who had been in bondage unto death the door of the temple, which is the mouth, and giving us repentance leadeth us to the incorruptible temple.

^{xi} Saved for later

Is it not understandable that the judgment of God will be most heavy on those who teach others differently concerning baptism? What sacrament can be compared with baptism? And what can be more cruel and demonic than hindering others from being baptized after believing the gospel, and thereby preventing them from receiving the forgiveness of sins and eternal life? If those who break one of the least commandments of God and teaches others to do so will be the least in the kingdom of God, what will be the judgment of those who not only refuse to enter the cleansing waters of baptism but hinder others also?

^{xiii} The Transformation in Baptism

All of the church fathers claimed that through baptism we are totally transformed, from darkness to light, from a sinner to a saint, from a child of the earth to a child of God. Here are just a few of thousands of such references.

Cyprian Discourse on Theophany (220 C.E.)

10. Come then, be begotten again, O man, into the adoption of God. And how? says one. If thou practisest adultery no more, and committest not murder, and servest not idols; if thou art not overmastered by pleasure; if thou dost not suffer the feeling of pride to rule thee; if thou cleanest off the filthiness of impurity, and puttest off the burden of sin; if thou castest off the armour of the devil, and puttest on the breastplate of faith, even as Isaiah saith, “Wash you, and seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow. And come and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, I shall make them white as snow; and though they be like crimson, I shall make them white as wool. And if ye be willing, and hear my voice, ye shall eat the good of the land.” Do you see, beloved, how the prophet spake beforetime of the purifying power of baptism? For he who comes down in faith to the laver of regeneration, and renounces the devil, and joins himself to Christ; who denies the enemy, and makes the confession that Christ is God; who puts off the bondage, and puts on the adoption,—he comes up from the baptism brilliant as the sun, flashing forth the beams of righteousness, and, which is indeed the chief thing, he returns a son of God and joint-heir with Christ. To Him be the glory and the power, together with His most holy, and good, and quickening Spirit, now and ever, and to all the ages of the ages. Amen.

^{xiii} Attacks against the form of Baptism

Even from the very beginning there were attempts made to change the form of baptism. Although the almost total victory did not come in the Roman Catholic church until the twelfth century. Until this time it was common that the churches had a baptismal tank for full immersion. As the enemy almost totally conquered the church there was no need for baptismal tanks any longer. The eastern Orthodox church however held fast to the form and did not fall as completely.

One of the first writings mentioning the changing of the form of baptism:

Didache (50-120 C.E.)

And concerning baptism, baptize this way: Having first said all these things, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water. But if you have no living water, baptize into other water; and if you cannot do so in cold water, do so in warm. But if you have neither, pour out water three times upon the head into the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit. But before the baptism let the baptizer fast, and the baptized, and whoever else can; but you shall order the baptized to fast one or two days before.

Cyprian himself, who clearly understood the necessity of baptism for salvation, yielded to the changing of the form in the case of terminally ill people who may suffer if baptized.