

Messianic Believer's Discipleship
Raymond Gannon, Ph.D.

- 1A. MESSIANIC FAITH, A FAITH FOR ALL MANKIND
- 1B. God's Intention for Mankind
 God has two major purposes for man on the earth:
- 1C. To replenish the earth. Gen 1.26,28
 "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it." God wanted mankind to populate the earth and effectively govern the world. Man would be God's agent upon the earth.
- 2C. To reflect the image of God. Gen 1.27,31
 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him. . . . and, behold, it was very good." God wanted a being to mirror or bear His own likeness: man would be a reflection of God, a representative.
- 2B. The Consequences of Sin (Genesis 3)
- When man sinned, he proved to be a keen disappointment to God:
- 1C. Engaging in sin immediately marred the nature of man. He could never be innocent but now grossly misrepresented the nature and likeness of God.
- 2C. No longer functioning according to God's purpose, man was no longer worthy of blessing, but a curse. A curse was placed upon man, his descendants, and the universe over which man had been given dominion.
- 3B. Establishment of the Chosen People through Abraham. (Gen 12.1-3)
 God proved unwilling to accept defeat. His love for mankind compelled Him to provide a means of drawing men back to Himself. God promised to make of Abraham a nation:
- 1C. To witness to all nations the unity of God;
- 2C. To be a source of blessing to all families of the earth by serving as an agent of reconciliation to God.
- 4B. The Establishment of Biblical Judaism
 God wanted the entirety of mankind to know and worship Him. In order to help them understand His purposes, He provided a "frame of reference" as background.

- 1C. Judaism was afforded divine revelation by which God gave us the truth of God's Law, the unity of God, the Ten Commandments, principles of social justice, etc.
 - 2C. Judaism was nationalistic in nature. Those coming to faith in the One God normally associated with the "one people of God."
- 5B. The Promise of the New Covenant (Jer 31.31-34)
Jeremiah prophesied a New Covenant which would:
- 1C. Be spiritual in nature (33).
 - 2C. Enable men to personally know God. (34)
- 6B. Instigation of the New Covenant
(Matthew 26.26-28)
- 1C. The New Covenant was instigated by the Messiah Yeshua.
 - 2C. Yeshua's own mutilated flesh and shed blood ratified and made effective the New Covenant.
- 7B. Universal in Application.
- 1C. The New Covenant did not limit itself to national or natural Israel; while it was firstly for Israel and Judah, it was also God's means of reconciling mankind to Himself. Yeshua therefore instructed us, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." (Mark 16.15)
 - 2C. The New Covenant does not require individual believers to change cultures, political affiliations, national identities, or the like. Yeshua is Lord of every culture, people, and nation.

The Messiah Yeshua is God's agent through whom Israel can reach out to all men and invite them to together become the "one people of God." (Ephesians 2.14-15)

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2A. SALVATION (Spiritual Transformation)

God has taken the believer from the darkest depths of condemnation to the loftiest heights of salvation in Yeshua.

1B. Man's natural state is "Lost in sin."

Luke 19:10; 2Cor 4:3

Man without salvation is in trouble.

1C. Because a man has sinned, he is condemned and can only await the wrath of God against his sin. (Rm 3:23; 6:23)

2C. Man is a slave to sin, in bondage, hopelessly ensnared. There is no means by which a man can free himself. Jn 8:34; 2Pet 2:19

2B. God has taken the initiative to redeem men.

Jn 3:16-17

1C. Man had to be prepared to receive redemption, that is, to be able to understand his need and God's actions.

1D. God provided many types and shadows of redemption throughout the Torah and entire Tenakh. The blood sacrificial system, Lev 17:11, etc.

2D. Through man's discovery of his inability to keep the Law, man was able to discern his need of a Savior. Rm 7:7-15

2C. In the fullness of time, God sent the Savior and Messiah, Yeshua.

1D. God had prophesied of the coming Redeemer. Is 53; Dt 18:15-19; Ps 22

2D. Yeshua Himself instituted the New Covenant and personal salvation. Mt 26:26-28

3B. The Ways and Means of Personal Salvation

- 1C. The seeker must recognize (1) his own inability to save himself and (2) his need of a Redeemer. Rm 3:23; 6:23
 - 2C. He must exercise faith in the atoning work of the Messiah Yeshua, that is, have confidence in the Biblical teaching and confess Yeshua. Rm 10:9-10
 - 3C. Several divine acts occur at the moment of salvation. The new believer is:
 - 1D. Justified. Rm 3:24,28
 - 2D. Sanctified. 1Cor 1:2; 6:11; Heb 10:10
 - 3D. Regenerated (born again). Jn 3:3-7
 - 4D. Spiritually immersed into Messiah's people. 1Cor 12:13
- 4B. The Wonderful Benefits of Salvation include:
- 1C. Liberation from sin. Rm 6:6-14
 - 2C. Freedom from condemnation. Rm 8:1
 - 3C. Eternal Life. Jn 3:16-17
 - 4C. Transformation into the likeness of Messiah Yeshua. The Holy Spirit changes us so that we ultimately will accurately reflect the likeness and image of God. 1Cor 15:49-53

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3A. THE MIKVAH--WATER IMMERSION

The Mikvah is one of the two ordinances commonly practiced in our Movement. Like the Lord's Seder, the Mikvah is indispensable.

1B. Types from the Old Testament (Tenakh)

Water immersion per se was not original with the Messiah Yeshua. It had several OT meanings and was commonly practiced in the Hebrew Scriptures. For example:

- 1C. The Priestly cleansing for service/worship.
Ex 30:17-21; 40:12; Lev 16:23-26; 22:6
- 2C. Ceremonial cleansing of the Leper.
Lev 14:1-9
- 3C. Part of the spiritual identification process for gentiles coming to faith in the God of Israel.
- 4C. Ritual cleansing after completion of the menstrual cycle to allow for resumption of normal conjugal rights.
- 5C. John's baptism was of the OT order. It signified repentance and dependence on God for salvation in the midst of impending catastrophe and judgment.
Mt 3:1-8

2B. Water immersion (the Mikvah) was prescribed for all new believers by the Messiah Yeshua Himself.

- 1C. The Messiah Yeshua has commanded that *every* believer follow His own example of being fully immersed in water. Mt 28:19
- 2C. The Mikvah is to be undertaken in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Mt 28:19
- 3C. The Mikvah is to be accomplished by *total* immersion.
 - 1D. Total immersion is the biblical and traditional Jewish means of the mikvah purification ritual.

- 2D. Circumstantial evidence would likewise indicate New Covenant *mikvaot* were by complete immersion. Acts 8:38
- 3D. The NT Greek word "*baptidzo*" signifies "immersion."

3B. The spiritual importance of the Mikvah.

- 1C. It indicates the washing away of the impurity of sin. Acts 22:16
- 2C. It heralds the believer's victory over sin; sin has no further dominion over him. Rm 6:1-14
- 3C. It declares the believer's total identification with the Messiah Yeshua in His death, burial, and resurrection. Rm 6:3; Gal 3:27; Col 2:12-13; 1Pet 3:21-22
- 4C. It espouses the believer's identification with the redeemed (*spiritually circumcised*) Messianic community of faith. 1Cor 12:13; Col 2:11

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4A. THE LORD'S SEDER

1B. The Hebrew Bible Background:

1C. Passover (Ex 12)

1D. At the first Passover (Pesach), God delivered the children of Israel from enslavement to the Egyptian bondage. After some 400 years of servitude to harsh task-masters, God set the people free to serve God.

2D. Among the rich symbolism of the Passover events and prescribed rituals are two particularly significant emblems.

1E. The Matzah, the unleavened bread, symbolizes the absence of sin. As the *afikomen*, it is broken ceremonially at the conclusion of the meal and distributed to all.

2E. The Wine, symbolizes the joy associated with the accomplished redemption and liberty. The Cup of Redemption follows the breaking of the Matzah (the *afikomen*).

2C. The New Covenant to be divinely made with Israel and Judah was prophesied by Jeremiah 31:31-34. Biblical covenants were to be ratified and made operational by the mutilation of flesh and the shedding of blood.

2B. The Messiah Yeshua's Institution of the Lord's Seder.

Mt 26:26-28; 1Cor 11:23-32

1C. Yeshua ratified and made effective the New Covenant that God had promised six centuries earlier.

- 1D. After the Seder meal, Yeshua broke the matzah (*afikomen*) to symbolize His soon-to-be mutilated flesh and instructed them to partake. (Mt 26:26)
- 2D. After their eating of the matzah, Yeshua took the Cup of Redemption (the third cup) and instructed them to drink. The wine symbolized His soon-to-be shed blood. (Mt 26:27-28)

- 2C. This Lord's Seder is to be enjoyed on a regular basis so as to perpetually acknowledge our Messiah's sacrifice on our behalf **and** so as to constantly celebrate its continuing effectiveness for our lives.
(I Cor 11.24-26)

3B. **Qualifications for partaking in the Lord's Seder**

- 1C. One may partake as long as the believer is also exercising a vital faith in Yeshua and has been genuinely regenerated by the Spirit of God.
- 2C. One may partake who has repented of sin, i.e., one who is not living in a state of rebellion against the Lord. (The initial Biblical witness of this is water immersion)
1Cor 11:27-29

4B. **The Spiritual Witness of the Lord's Seder to the Believer.**

By partaking, the Believer:

- 1C. **Acknowledges** his confidence in and total dependence upon the atoning work of Messiah. (I Cor 11.24)
- 2C. **Identifies** with and is acknowledged as an integral part of the New Covenant Messianic Faith Community (the Lord's Believing Body).
- 3C. **Embraces** his liberation from enslavement to sin and self and his freedom to pursue righteousness in his new life in God.
Rm 6:11-14

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5A. PRAYER

Prayer is one of the greatest privileges God has ever afforded man: the ability to commune with the Living God, the Creator and Sustainer of all, the Lord of Glory.

1B. God's Expectation

We see that God expects the believers to engage in prayer, taking advantage of this wonderful privilege 1Chr 16:11; Luke 18:1

2B. God's Conditions for Effective Prayer

God does establish conditions for effective (meaningful) prayer in the Scriptures. In order to actively communicate and transact with God, the believer must be certain to:

1C. Pray with contrition of spirit. 2Chr 7:14-15

God resists the proud, the arrogant, and all those with inflated opinions of themselves.

2C. Pray wholeheartedly. Jer 29:13

Prayer characterized by day-dreaming or excessive generalities cannot expect to be productive.

3C. Pray in faith. Mark 11:24

God does respect and require faith. He fully expects His children to trust His Word and to believe in His desire to work in them and with them.

4C. Pray with our lives characterized with righteousness.

We are clothed with the righteousness of Messiah. We must also be deliberately pursuing a righteous life-style. Mark 11:25; James 5:13-16

5C. Be living a life of obedience. I John 3:21-22

We need to be walking in submission to the Word of God and heeding the special convictions the Holy Spirit ministers to our lives.

6C. Be abiding in our Messiah Yeshua. John 15:7-8

As we dwell in Yeshua and His Word dwells in us, we are compelled to pray for things consistent with His desires.

3B. Prayer is to be offered in Yeshua's Name.

Only through Yeshua do we have an audience with God.
John 16:23-24

4B. Prayer is to be constant.

We are to maintain a continuing prayerful attitude and be in a perpetual spirit of prayer. 1Th 5:17; 1Chr 16:11; Ep 6:18

5B. The Benefits of Spiritually Genuine and Biblically Formulated Prayer.

1C. God answers and rewards properly patterned prayer.
Ps 91:14-16; Luke 11:9-10

2C. Wholesome prayer produces an abundance of joy in the believer's life. John 16:24

3C. Biblically-sound prayer yields strength over temptation.
Mt 26:41

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6A. BIBLE STUDY AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

1B. The Power of the Word of God

1C. Upon the Unbeliever (before salvation):

- 1D. The Word generates faith. Rm 10:17
- 2D. It clarifies the meaning of repentance.
Acts 3:17-20
- 3D. The Word leads men to salvation. 2Tim 3:15-17
- 4D. The Word works in partnership with the Spirit
in regeneration. Jn 3:5-6; 1Pet 1:23-25

2C. Upon the Believer:

- 1D. The Word enables the Believer to both know and
do the will of God.
- 2D. It prevents our being swept away by feelings or
emotional drives. Ps 119:105
- 3D. It protects the Believer against spiritual onslaught.
Mt 4:1-4; Jer 23:29; Ep 6:17
- 4D. The Word encourages the Believer in the midst
of spiritual battle. Is 41:10; Ps 37:30-31

2B. The Word is Vital for Personal Messianic Ministry

- 1C. God wants us to know and obey the Word.
Josh 1:8; Is 34:16
- 2C. Yeshua was a Student of the Word and quoted it freely.
- 3C. If we are to be used of God, we must discover by Bible
study the divinely established principles God requires
us to abide by.
- 4C. The Word equips us to combat error, i.e., heresy.
- 5C. The Word can prevent our loss of reward as we detect
improper motivations for our service. 1Cor 3:11-15

3B. The Direct Correlation between Bible Study and Spiritual Growth.

- 1C. God's purpose is to sanctify us, that is, to set apart and make holy His children. Through the Word the saints are becoming more like the Lord in Holiness.
Jn 17.17-19 Ps 119.9,11
- 2C. The Word reveals what God is like. By deliberate compliance, that is, by purposeful obedience to the written revelation of God, we cooperate with the Holy Spirit in becoming more like our Lord.
I Jn 4.8,11,16,19-21
- 3C. The Word protects us from theological error which could pervert our understanding of God's truth and lead to spiritual shipwreck.
- 4C. Such discoveries of God's principles impact our life-style--putting us in a proper position to fully benefit from God's spiritual blessings in our present walk.