

March 21, 2019

Dear Members:

The time is approaching once again as we move towards an occasion and a decision that is the most important in our personal lives. Those of us who are baptized and became begotten Children of God—those of us who made at that time the lifelong commitment to be obedient to Him—will make the decision to take the Passover in a worthy manner. Yes, it is a choice, just as it was a choice we made to become baptized in the first place—just as God chose US to come out of this world, by revealing to us His perfect knowledge and His plan. That is why we are all here, because we have answered His calling (compare Ephesians 1:4-5; Romans 8:28-30).

Has our life been easier since last year or has it been difficult at times? Have we encountered trials? Have we thought about giving up? For some of us, this may be our first Passover and for others, this could be our 10th or 20th or 30th and more. But the number of Passovers we have participated in doesn't matter. What matters is what we do right now and how we prepare for the Passover evening of Thursday, April 18, 2019.

We should put it into this perspective with the mindset that the Passover coming up should be the most important one we take, for we move forward in our goal to perfection. We are to improve ourselves, and when we take the Passover, we are given a clean slate in that we should live righteously, as God expects of us. We need to have the conviction in our hearts and our minds that we will improve, that we will live better lives.

NOT taking the Passover would be a grave mistake. Finding excuses and reasons not to take it, based on personal problems, grudges that we may have with one another, which we find difficult letting go of, or whatever the case may be, shows that we aren't strong enough to overcome. Not to partake of the Passover would be devastating for our eternal salvation. We would have no part with Christ (John 6:48-58). When we were baptized, we chose to overcome. We made that choice and were convinced that this is what we HAD to do.

Do we really long for and pray for God's soon-coming Kingdom or do we still doubt that it will come soon, in our lifetime? Our perspective on prayer, in what we pray for, should be just as important. We all want a better future, a future without pain, suffering, sorrow and worry, but rather one of happiness, joy and righteousness. That result begins with living a sinless life the best that we can. Although we are not perfect, we should be heading towards perfection in how we live.

Removing sin in our lives is pictured in the days that immediately follow the Passover. For seven days we are focused on what we are not to eat during that time—that is anything leavened, as part of our God-given duty to keep the Days of Unleavened Bread as described, for example, in Exodus 12:14-20; 23:15; Leviticus 23:6-8; Numbers 28:17-25; and Deuteronomy 16:3-8. Rather, we are to eat unleavened bread during that time which pictures sincerity, truth and lack of hypocrisy (1 Corinthians 5:8; Luke 12:1).

Before that, we make the effort to clean our households, cars and belongings by removing all leavened products, as during the Days of Unleavened Bread, leaven pictures sin for us. This goes to show us just how much effort it takes to remove sin out of our lives, and to do this on a continuous basis. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). That is why we need to be focused and prepared

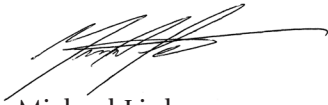
and pray always to God for strength so that we can overcome until Christ comes back to establish His Kingdom here on earth.

The most important decision we have made in our lives is to follow God and to live HIS Way of Life until the very end, by DOING what He expects of us to do, what He has predestined for us before time began. We can't even comprehend how incredible it will be in His future Kingdom; and what we observe today, by keeping the Sabbath and His Holy Days, gives us a foretaste of what is to come.

But we have a job to do first, a choice to make, to continue to fulfill His perfect plan for us, and to hold on to our crown (Revelation 2:10; 3:11; 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4). We must not throw our crown away or do anything which will cause it to be lost!

With all of that in mind, we are wishing you a meaningful and spiritually rewarding Passover and seven Days of Unleavened Bread.

With Christian love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Link', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Link