



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 68”

November 1st, 2009
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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 68

Matthew 27:51-56, Mark 15:38-41, Luke 23:45, 23:47-49

At that moment [when Jesus died], the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

In our last lesson, we reviewed the fact that Jesus submitted to His Passion experience and His crucifixion to fulfill that which the Scripture prophesied of the Messiah. Jesus fulfilled His heavenly responsibility by dying to atone for the sins of mankind after having lived a sinless life Himself in order to fulfill the Scripture. Having completed the task assigned to Him by His Father, He returned to God, as **Matthew 27:45-50, Mark 15:33-37, Luke 23:45-49, John 19:28-30** tells us:

After taking the wine, Jesus again cried out in a loud voice, “It is finished!”

Then [Jesus] bowed His head. “Father,” He said, “into Your hands I commit My spirit.”

After saying these words, [Jesus] yielded up His spirit and breathed His last.

Jesus sacrificed Himself in the presence of witnesses that transmitted His experience to us so that those of us that are willing to believe in God’s prophecy, Jesus’ sacrifice and Jesus’ Lordship over our lives can avoid eternal condemnation.

Jesus died on the Cross although it would have been more satisfying for Him to come down from the Cross, as He had been tempted to do. But Jesus did not come down because God’s plan was not to save the Nation of Israel from judgment with the Cross; God’s plan was to use Jesus’ giving of Himself at the Cross to save the world from condemnation, as **John 3:16-17** tells us:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Our salvation is based upon the two parts of this passage of Scripture, first of all, that Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, gave His life as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. The second part of **John 3:16-17** indicates that we are saved because we believe in that which Jesus Christ has done for us.



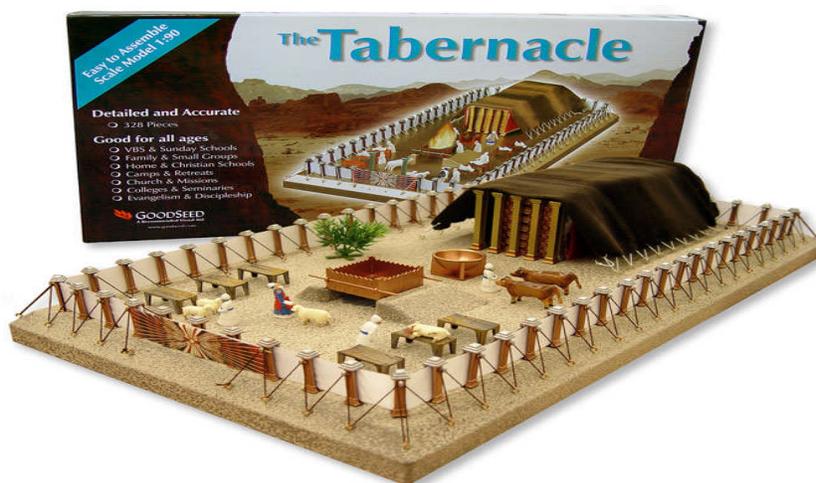
FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

Matthew 27:51-56, Mark 15:38-41, Luke 23:45, 23:47-49 tells us:

At that moment [when Jesus died], the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

The tearing of the veil in the temple was a particularly momentous sign of the change in God's relationship with mankind. The book of Exodus records that during the time of Moses, after the Nation of Israel was rescued from Egyptian slavery and was travelling to the Promised Land, God designed the Tabernacle as a portable sanctuary that the Israelites could carry with them as they travelled. They could set the Tabernacle up, worship God, and then take it down and continue their journey. **Deuteronomy 16:16** told the Jews:

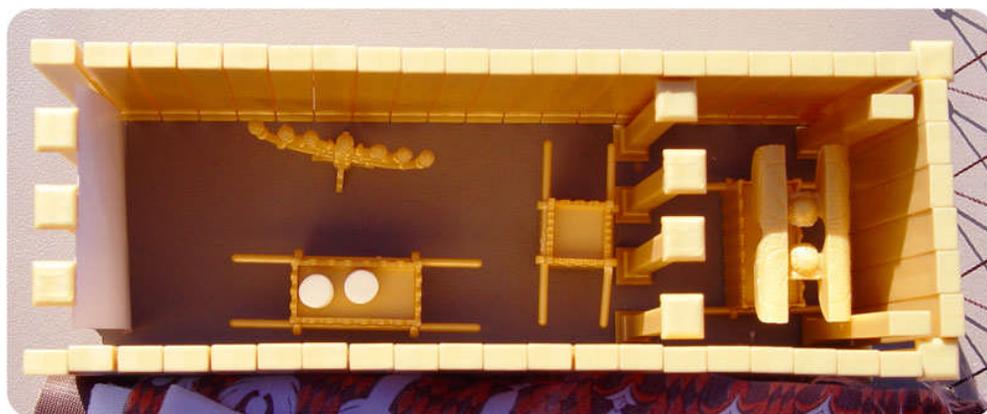
16 "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.



The tabernacle consisted of a tent-like structure covered by rug-like coverings for a roof, and an external courtyard (150 feet by 75 feet). The compound was surrounded by a 7 foot fence made of linen hangings held by pillars. The tent was made of wooden boards overlaid with gold and fitted together to form the walls, measuring 45 long by 30 feet high by 15 feet wide. On top, four layers of curtains acted as a roof to shield the tabernacle from sun and rain. The inside of the tent was divided into the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH



The Holy Place measured 30 feet long, 30 feet high and by 15 feet wide, and the Most Holy Place (the section of the diagram to the right of the four pillars) was a perfect 15 foot cube, 15 feet long, high and wide. Inside this Most Holy part of the tent, shielded from the eye of the common man, was a wooden chest 3 feet 9 inches long, 2 feet 3 inches high and 2 feet 3 inches wide, overlaid with pure gold inside and outside. This chest was called the Ark of the Testimony (or the Ark of the Covenant), and it contained a pot containing one day's portion of the manna that fell from heaven during the Exodus, Aaron's wooden rod that produced buds and flowers while Aaron was holding it in the presence of the Pharaoh to show the Pharaoh the power of God, and the two stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai. These items, each of which was a direct testimony of the interaction of God with Israel, were considered the most Holy items of Judaism.





FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

The Ark of the Testimony was covered by a lid that was decorated with two golden angels, or cherubim, symbols of God's divine presence and power, pointed toward one another, facing downward toward the ark with outstretched wings that covered the atonement cover. The whole structure was beaten out of one piece of pure gold. In **Exodus 25:22**, God said to Moses:

22 And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

In **Leviticus 16:2**:

2 and the Lord said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother [the High Priest] not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.

A woven curtain, called the "veil", made of fine linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, 4 inches thick, 30 feet high and 15 feet wide separated the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place.



You can see the veil on the figure just behind and attached to the four pillars. There were figures of cherubim (angels) embroidered onto the veil. Cherubim, spirits who guarded the throne of God, were in the presence of God to demonstrate His almighty power and majesty.

The veil was a barrier between man and God, showing that man could not trifle with the holiness of God. God's eyes are too pure to look on evil and He can tolerate no sin, as **Habakkuk 1:13** tells us:



13 You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness.

The veil was a barrier to make sure that man did not carelessly and irreverently enter God's awesome presence. When the high priest entered the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement, he had to make meticulous preparations: He had to wash himself, put on special clothing, bring burning incense to let the smoke cover his eyes from a direct view of God, and bring blood from a freshly killed animal with him to make atonement for sins.

When Herod built his temple, he doubled the size of the Holy Place, making it 60 feet long, 60 feet high and 30 feet wide. When Jesus died, the veil was 4 inches thick, 60 feet high and 30 feet wide, and took 300 priests to embroider and refurbish it each year. Herod did not have the internal furnishings for the Most Holy Place that the Old Testament proscribed, because those original items had been taken from Solomon's Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BC when they took Judah into captivity. But the Holy and Most Holy Places held the same meaning for the Jews in Jesus' day as they did for the Jews that presided over the tabernacle built under the supervision of Moses.

Leviticus 16:2 makes it clear only the Levites could enter the Holy Place, and no one except the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place, on pain of death. But **Matthew 27:51-56, Mark 15:38-41, Luke 23:45, 23:47-49** tells us that when Jesus died on the Cross:

At that moment [when Jesus died], the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all record that the 4 inch thick, 60 foot high piece of cloth that served as the barrier to ceremonially separate sinful man from Holy God was torn from top to bottom when Jesus died. The place where the annual Jewish sacrifices for sin were offered by the most holy and purified of the Jewish leaders once a year was no longer holy; it was exposed to the view of anyone that wished to look into it. As shocking as this may have been to the priests ministering in the temple that day, it is indeed good news to us as believers, because the tearing of the veil of the temple represents the end of the rituals of the Jewish Temple, the end of animal sacrifices for sins, and the end of the Jewish priesthood. All of the Jewish rituals that were instituted by God in the Old Testament were ended, because Jesus' death has atoned for our sins and made us right before God. Let us listen to God's own explanation, as given beginning in **Hebrews 9:1-3, 6-7**:

1 Then indeed, even the first covenant [the covenant recorded in the Old Testament] had ordinances of divine service [by the Levites] and the earthly sanctuary.

2 For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part [the Holy Place], in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the



sanctuary;

3 and behind the second veil [the veil of the temple is], the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All [or the Most Holy Place],
6 Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, [the Holy Place] performing the services.

7 But into the second part [, the Most Holy Place,] the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance;

So, the elaborate rituals, ceremonies and sacrifices in the Tabernacle were the focal point of the worship of God, Who designed these elaborate rituals to bring His chosen people into a relationship with Him. But the next verse goes on to tell us, in **Hebrews 9:8**:

8 the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.

Although there was a physical, earthly place that the Jews called the Most Holy Place, there was yet another place, the Holiest of All, even more holy than the Most Holy Place, that God had not revealed to the Jews. Although God initially ordained tabernacle worship for the Jews, tabernacle worship was only symbolic, as **Hebrews 9:9-10** explained:

9 [The tabernacle and tabernacle worship] was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—
10 concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

Since the elements of tabernacle worship were all physical and earthly, they did not meet man's need for the improvement of his conscience and his spirit.

Our problem is that we can say that we are sorry for our sins but not actually be sorry; we can offer a sacrifice of atonement for our sins but have no desire to atone; we can perform the physical rituals required for repentance by the Scripture while not actually being repentant. We can perform rituals and ceremonies, give offerings and sacrifices and do anything else external that may change our circumstances on the outside, but all those actions can leave us unchanged on the inside. **Matthew 9:10-11** tells us:

10 Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.

11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

The Pharisees held that the tax collectors and sinners were irrevocably lost because they neglected the rituals of the tabernacle that God required while



the Pharisees observed them. But the reality of the situation was that the performance of the rituals by the Pharisees had not changed them. Consider: had the sacrifices actually changed the Pharisees from sinfulness to sinlessness, they would have had no need to continue to make the sacrifices. In reality, the focus of the Pharisees on the sacrifices for sin only proved that the Pharisees were still sinners that needed to repent, just as were the tax collectors and sinners.

But when God Himself showed up, in the person of Jesus Christ, with the offer to actually cleanse sin once and for all, the tax collectors and sinners responded to God's offer to cleanse them from their sin while the Pharisees disdained God's offer to cleanse them. The Pharisees chose, rather than being cleansed, to continue observing the rituals.

In reality, the Pharisees did not worship God, but rather, they worshipped the rituals that God gave them. The Pharisees did not worship God, but rather, they worshiped the Temple that God gave them. So, in **Matthew 9:12**:
12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick."

Jesus came to earth as the physician with the ability to heal both physical disease and sin.

When Marie and I started dancing, I was not aware of the fact that my wife's feet hurt her terribly. I didn't know because she didn't complain, but she took Advil to relieve the pain. But eventually, the pain made her decide to have her feet fixed. She had a damaged joint in each of her big toes, and her surgeon replaced them with titanium joints. On her right foot, the surgeon also had to break a bone that had become crooked and realign the bones in her foot to make them straight. The surgeon temporarily immobilized Marie's feet so that she couldn't injure them while they healed. At our last visit, the surgeon pronounced the healing process complete, and now Marie has to get some exercise to allow her muscles, which have atrophied to some degree since her foot was immobilized, to recover and regain full function. Now Marie is healed. Of course, Marie did have an alternative to surgery. She could have taken increasingly stronger pain killers to relieve the pain in her feet caused by our dancing.

In His interaction with the tax collectors and sinners, Jesus was doing what the physician does.

Jesus was actually healing their sin sickness by giving them a New Birth. He was filling them with the Holy Spirit and they were being changed on the inside, actually repenting of their sins and developing a new life, as Jesus told Nicodemus, in **John 3:3**:

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

But the Pharisees did not want to be healed; the Pharisees did not want the New Birth, because they were satisfied taking the painkillers of performing



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

rituals. Their rituals made them feel okay, like painkillers might make someone able to function temporarily. But they refused to recognize that the rituals in the temple did not heal their sinfulness and cause them to repent, but rather simply acknowledged the fact that they were still sinners.

Jesus had the prescription for their sinfulness, and He gave it in **Matthew 9:13**, which says:

13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Jesus says, "Pharisee, your sacrifice does not heal your sin. Your sacrifice does not change you. When you perform your sacrifice, you acknowledge your continued sin, but you are not healed. You have simply taken a painkiller.

"God wants to be merciful to you. God doesn't want you to continue sacrificing, and He sent Me to have mercy on you and heal you. But I can't do it unless you allow me to.

"It is ultimately pointless to acknowledge your sin if you have no plans to change it. If you are committed to simply sacrificing over and over, your sacrifice leads to repetition rather than repentance, and although repeating the cycle of sin and sacrifice may make you feel better, ultimately, it is useless."

But Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross does away with the repetition of the Jewish sacrificial system. **Hebrews 9:11-12** tells us:

11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.

12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

The Blood that Jesus Christ shed on the Cross is not just "a" sacrifice for our sins. The Blood that Jesus Christ shed on the Cross is the solution for our sins. God tells us that the Blood that Jesus Christ shed on the Cross solved the problem of sin once for all. We are no longer under the curse of the law of repetitious, ineffective sacrifice. That's why God tells us, in **Romans 6:23**:

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Every time that the High Priest went into the Most Holy Place, he took death with him. The altar in the Holy Place was the place where the priest killed an animal; the High Priest could not enter the Most Holy Place without the blood of a freshly killed animal, because the wages of sin is death.

Jesus Christ took the penalty for our sins on Himself. He took His Own Blood into the Heavenly Tabernacle and offered it for our sins, once for all, and our sins no longer require any other sacrifice. No more earthly altar, no more earthly killing, no more animal blood. How do I know? **Matthew 27:51-56, Mark 15:38-41, Luke 23:45, 23:47-49** tells us that when Jesus died on the Cross:



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

At that moment [when Jesus died], the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

The veil is torn. God is no longer there. The Most Holy Place is no longer Most Holy. We no longer have to offer sacrifices. We no longer have to offer blood to God.

Jesus tells Nicodemus about the new way to please God, in **John 3:3-6:**

3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

You have to be born of the Spirit. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, but as **1 Corinthians 15:50, 53** tells us:

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

We have to be reborn, rather than perform sacrifices, to be changed. Since the veil of the Temple was torn in two, the old commandments are no longer in effect. Since the veil of the Temple was torn in two, the new commandment is in effect. The new commandment has nothing to do with rituals or sacrifices, but, as Jesus tells us, in **John 13:34-35:**

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

No temple. No rituals. No sacrifices. No looking down on tax collectors and sinners. No disdain for others that are not as good as us. We have to give up the old in order to embrace the new. Paul tells us, in **1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (NIV):**

1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Mary said, “I’m married, and I have a small child. I have three younger sisters, and my parents divorced when I was four. I feel that issues from my past, like the divorce, have caused me to be very angry. I don’t know if that’s the



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

source of my anger, but I find that I'm taking out my anger on my husband. My husband and I get into arguments a lot, and he tells me that he doesn't know why I am so angry all the time. He says that I need to work on my anger issues. And my mom used to say that to me when I was younger. But I don't know how to deal..."

Her counselor interrupted, "And still you got away with that? Your mom didn't deal with your anger?"

Mary responded, "Well, uh...I guess I just can't help myself. I get angry."

The counselor continued, "You're making it sound like your angry reactions are out of your control. You were angry because your parents got divorced, and now you feel justified in making other people miserable."

Mary was shocked. "Well, uh...I...", she stammered.

"Yes", said the counselor, "you just told me that you're taking out your anger on your husband. That means that you feel, in your own mind, that making your husband miserable is something that you are justified to do. You feel justified in your own mind. You have decided that somebody should be punished and made miserable because you had the misfortune to grow up in a broken home, and since you can't or don't want to make your parents miserable, you married a man so that you could take it out on him. Of course, your husband had nothing to do with your broken home, but you feel like you should be able to take your anger about having had a broken home out on somebody, and so you elected him."

Mary responded, "Then what can I possibly do about the underlying issue of being angry?"

The counselor replied, "The underlying issue is not the problem. The fact that you feel justified in making your husband miserable is the problem. If I told you that someone stuck pins in a voodoo doll and that's what's making you angry, you would have the same problem."

"Well", Mary responded, "how do I go about realizing when I'm getting angrier or more upset. I don't know how to control that type of emotion."

"Sure you do", said the counselor. "You don't do it to your minister. You don't do it to a police officer. You don't do it to a nurse or to the doctor. You only do it when you think you can get away with it. So when you say you can't control it, you know that's not true. You control it all the time when the price you would have to pay for showing it would be too great."

"I guess that's true", said Mary.

"Oh Mary, you know how to be sweet if you want to. But", said the counselor, "you hurt your husband because you feel entitled to. You feel justified in hurting your husband. You married him so that you would have someone to take your anger out on. You were sweet to him long enough to make him want to marry you, and you seduced him into making vows to stay with you for the rest of your life. Now you think that you can abuse him to your heart's content because



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

he can't leave. You feel that you can mistreat him because he will stay and take it. You feel safe, and so you do it all of the time. You know, at least you thought you knew, that he would stay. But the reason that you are seeking counseling now is that you are realizing that eventually people get enough. Sometimes, people don't stay. You can only kick a dog so many times, and he won't come anymore."

Mary thought. "So", she responded, "you're pretty much saying that I'm dealing with someone that I don't need to take out the anger on. I should not treat him badly."

The counselor replied, "Mary, if you want to keep your husband, you will have to change. You will have to put your childhood anger behind you. Understand how this works. Men that leave their marriages very seldom decide to leave their children. Men that leave their marriages usually decide to leave their wives, and they end up leaving their children because their wives keep the children. Men leave their wives either because they are just bad men or because their wives mistreat them. Your father left your mother. You are behaving as though you want your husband to leave you as well. We know he's not a bad guy, so you're pushing him out by your behavior. Your anger may be because of your broken childhood home, but why you are angry is not really relevant. The relevant question now is, Do you want to see your husband leave or not? Think about it, because it's your decision. There was nothing you could do about your father leaving, but whether or not your husband leaves is your decision. You can either draw him in or push him out. I know, because you drew him in once, and now you are pushing him out. The one you do is up to you, so which one will it be?"

Saints, no ritual will help us if we want to be part of God's kingdom. To be part of God's kingdom, we will have to change. Paul tells us, in **1Corinthians 13:4-13 (NIV)**

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part,

10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.

12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.
13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

All of the rules, all of the regulations, all of the rituals, were for us as children.

Christianity is for us as adults.

There are no rules, no regulations, no rituals, just the obligation to love God and to love one another. But it requires adult maturity for us to live without the rules, so in order for us to be Christian, we have to put away childish things.

The veil of the temple is torn. The age of rituals is over. There are only two sacraments in the Christian Church. One is baptism, and a person can only effectively be baptized once. Baptism is a symbol of being born again, and you can only be reborn one time. Nicodemus made it clear that a man can not go back into his mother's womb and be born a second time. But, although Jesus differentiated between water birth, through the birth canal, and spirit birth through the Holy Spirit, He agreed with Nicodemus that there is only one of each birth per customer. If you have been baptized twice, one of those two times was just a ritual, not a rebirth.

The second sacrament is Communion, and it is a sacrament of remembrance, not of salvation. Taking communion does not save you, but just reminds you of that which Jesus Christ has done to save you. That's why Paul teaches us, in **1Corinthians 11:23-25**:

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Communion is a remembrance. There are no rules or regulations about communion. Paul does not say to take communion every week, every month, or three times a year. Paul says to take communion as often as you want to. It's not a ritual, it's a remembrance.

The veil in the temple is torn. The days of rituals are over. The days of external rules and regulations are over. The days of atonements for sin are over. The days of laws and regulations are over. There is only one law, with two commandments. **Matthew 22:35-40** tells us:

35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked [Jesus] a question, testing Him, and saying,

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

37 Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Jesus Christ died so that our sins would be forgiven. If we are born again, we will love God for saving us, and spend the rest of our time figuring out how to love our neighbor. We may slip and sin, but our sins have been forgiven. We don't have to perform any ritual to make up for that which we have done, because the Blood of Jesus Christ has paid the penalty for all that we have done. All we have to do is to repent and return to loving God and our neighbor, as Jesus tells us, in **John 13:34-35**:

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Jesus died for us, and the veil of the temple is torn. Let us grow up, be adults, forget about the childish rules and regulations, and simply love one another as Christ has loved us.

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