

# Holy Epistle to the HEBREWS

Tammuz 28, 5773; July 6, 2013

Shabbat Matot/Massei

## Instructions before Immersion

*Let the man be instructed regarding the teaching of piety before his baptism: Knowledge about the unbegotten God, understanding about the only begotten Son, and full assurance about the Holy Spirit. Let him learn the order of distinctions of creation, the sequence of God's providence, the jurisdiction of different laws, why the world came to be and why God made man to be a citizen of the world. Let him understand his own nature, of what sort it is. Let him learn how God punished the wicked by water and fire, and glorified the righteous in each generation: I mean Seth, Enos, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and his descendants, Melchizedek, Job, Moses, both Joshua and Caleb, Phinehas the priest, and the holy ones in each generation. [Let him learn] how God, though he foresaw [Adam's sin and the fall of humanity], did not abandon the human race, but summoned them at various times from error and folly into an understanding of truth, leading them from slavery and wickedness into freedom and piety, from iniquity into righteousness, from eternal death into everlasting life. Let the one who offers himself learn during his instruction all these things and those that are related to them. (Apostolic Constitutions 7.39.2-4)*

## Preparing for Immersion

*I will also tell about the way in which we dedicated ourselves to God when we were first renewed through Christ, lest, if I skip over this, the explanation I am making seems incomplete. When a person is persuaded and believes that what we teach and say is true, and he undertakes to be able to live accordingly, he is instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of his sins from the past, and we pray and fast with him. (Justin Martyr, First Apology 61)*

## Fasting Before Immersion

*Now concerning baptism, this is how you should baptize: Having first said all these things (i.e. Didache 1-6) ... before the baptism let the baptizer fast, and the baptized, and whatever others can as well; but you shall order the baptized to fast one or two days before. (Didache 7:1-4)*

## The Immersion

*Then we bring him to some place where there is water, and he is regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, he then receives the washing with water. (Justin Martyr, First Apology 61)*

*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 do not have living water, baptize into other water; and if you do not have cold water, use warm. But if you have neither, pour out water thrice upon the head in the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit. (Didache 7:1-3)*

## The Investiture (Laying on of Hands)

*But we, after we have washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, we bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, so that we may offer sincere prayers, for ourselves, for the baptized person, and for all others in every place. We pray that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, and that by our deeds, we may be found to be good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. (Justin Martyr, First Apology 65)*

## Prayer for the New Disciple

*Let us all sincerely pray to God on behalf of the new disciple (chatechuman). May the One who is good and loves all men hear his prayers and receive his supplications kindly, and may he assist him and grant him the requests of his heart for good, and may he reveal to him the good news of his Messiah, enlighten him and give him understanding, educate him in the knowledge of God, teach him his ordinances and judgments, implant in him the pure and saving fear [of the LORD], open the ears of his heart to engage in his Torah day and night, and may he establish him in piety, unite him and number him with his holy flock, grant him the washing of regeneration, the garment of incorruption, the true life, and may he save him from all impiety and give place to no adversary against him, and may he cleanse him from all pollution of flesh and spirit, and may he dwell in him, and may he walk with him through his Messiah, and bless his coming in and his going out, and guide his affairs for their good. Let us still sincerely pray for him that, obtaining the remission of his trespasses through this initiation, may he be deemed worthy of the holy mysteries, and of remaining constantly with the righteous.*

*Now, arise, new disciple (chatechuman), and ask for the peace of God through His Messiah, so that today and the rest of your life will be peaceful and free from sin, and that you will end as a Christian, and that God will be gracious and kind, granting you forgiveness of trespasses. Dedicate yourself to the only unbegotten God through his Messiah. Bow down and receive a blessing [through the laying on of hands]. (Apostolic Constitutions 8.6.5-8)*

## Breaking the Fast

*Having finished the prayers, we greet one another with a kiss. Then they bring bread and a cup of wine mixed with water to the president of the brethren (i.e. the bishop). Taking the bread and the wine, he gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and he offers a long prayer of thanksgiving for our being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands. And when he has finished these prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying, "Amen." In the Hebrew language, this word, "Amen," means "So be it." When the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those we refer to as servants (deacons) give some of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced to each person present, and they carry away a portion to those who are absent. (Justin Martyr, First Apology 65)*