

# THE TRUTH ABOUT DEDICATION

## INTRODUCTION

*John 8:31-32* <sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. <sup>32</sup> And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Truth means real facts about something or the things that are true (Webster). Truth gives freedom from ignorance and bondage of sin – "shall make you free." However, some people are opposed to truth when revealed particularly when bringing them from error. On the other hand, some persons cherish a hidden truth revealed. Children of God must stand for the truth at all times.

## MEANING AND HISTORY OF DEDICATION

According to Strong, dedication primarily means *to make new; to renew; to initiate*. Ordinarily, it also means complete devotion and faith in someone or something.

Biblical dedication is to set apart and consecrate to a divine being or to a sacred purpose, to devote to a sacred use by a solemn act or by religious ceremonies as to dedicate vessels, treasures, a temple, an altar or a church house or a child to God or to a religious use. **Numbers 7:84,88** <sup>84</sup> This was the dedication offering for the altar from the leaders of Israel, when it was anointed: twelve silver platters, twelve silver bowls, and twelve gold pans. <sup>88</sup> And all the oxen for the sacrifice of peace offerings were twenty-four bulls, the rams sixty, the male goats sixty, and the lambs in their first year sixty. This was the dedication offering for the altar after it was anointed. **2 Chronicles 7:9** <sup>9</sup> And on the eighth day they held a sacred assembly, for they observed the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days. **Ezra 6:16-17** <sup>16</sup> Then the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy. <sup>17</sup> And they offered sacrifices at the dedication of this house of God, one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel twelve male goats,

according to the number of the tribes of Israel. **Nehemiah 12:27** <sup>27</sup> Now at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings and singing, with cymbals and stringed instruments and harps.

**Daniel 3:2-3** <sup>2</sup> And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. <sup>3</sup> So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. **John 10:22** <sup>22</sup> Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter.

## **THE FEAST OF DEDICATION**

The Feast of Dedication is also called *Hanukkah* today among the Jews. It was a Jewish feast or festival observed for eight days from the 25<sup>th</sup> of *Kislev* (usually in December but occasionally late November as a result of the Lunisolar calendar). The feast was instituted in 164BC by Judas Maccabeus. This was in commemoration (celebration in honor) of the reconstruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem and especially of the altar of burnt offerings. This was after the temple and the altar had been desecrated (polluted) during the persecution under *Antiochus Epiphanes* 168BC from hence it was called or known as the feast of dedication which the gospel of John referred to - **John 10:22-23** <sup>22</sup> Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. <sup>23</sup> And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.

The Feast of Dedication was celebrated anywhere lighting houses and synagogues was a prominent feature. It is also characteristic of eating of potato chips and special food.

## **Observation**

*Hanukkah* or the *Feast of Dedication* is not one of the festivals Moses instituted as part of the Law. However, dedication of some things was seen in the Old Testament which God tolerated or allowed. Ordinarily, anyone can dedicate or devote oneself to a course without ceremonies or fanfares or church. One can be dedicated to the life of Christ or live a Christian life without questioning or doubts.

## **CHRISTIAN AND DEDICATION**

Having got insight into the biblical meaning and the concept of dedication and its festivals, it would be proper to x-ray the Christian ethics and faith as practicable by Christians, in child dedication, house dedication or church dedication e.t.c.

God instructed Moses to dedicate (consecrate; set apart) the firstborn males to Him. In fact whatever is first to open the womb among the Israelites both of man and of beast - **Exodus 13:2,12** <sup>2</sup> *"Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine."* <sup>12</sup> *that you shall set apart to the LORD all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males shall be the LORD's.*

God instructed Moses on how the woman should be purified after birth because of the uncleanness. The Lord is specific with the instructions and its requirements basically directed at the Jews or the Israelites (the chosen people of God) - **Leviticus 12:1-8** <sup>1</sup> *Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,* <sup>2</sup> *"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. <sup>3</sup> And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. <sup>4</sup> She shall then continue in the blood of her purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled. <sup>5</sup> 'But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of her purification sixty-six days. <sup>6</sup> 'When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. <sup>7</sup> Then he shall offer it before the LORD, and make atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who has borne a male or a female. <sup>8</sup> 'And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons—one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'"*

## **CHRIST'S DEDICATION**

In line with the instructions of God to Moses, Christ was set apart; *dedicated* to the Lord. The earthly parents (Joseph and Mary) of Christ were Jews and they have to comply with the command. Christ lived as a Jew but corrected their errors and died a vicarious death. His birth and death was a fulfillment of the Law - **Luke 2:22-24** <sup>22</sup> *Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord* <sup>23</sup> *(as it is written in the law of the*

Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD"),<sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." **Luke 24:44** <sup>44</sup> Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." **Matthew 5:17** <sup>17</sup> "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

## **THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW**

Christians are not justified by the Law - **Romans 3:19-20** <sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. <sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. **Galatians 3:23-24** <sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. <sup>24</sup> Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Christ having come, Christians are subject to Him - **Matthew 17:5** <sup>5</sup> While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" **Hebrews 1:1-2** <sup>1</sup> God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds. **Hebrews 10:1-2** <sup>1</sup> For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. <sup>2</sup> For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

Christ is the end of the Law - **Romans 10:4** <sup>4</sup> For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Righteousness is in Christ.

## **CAN CHRISTIANS ATTEND OR DO DEDICATION FEASTS?**

By the death of Christ on the cross, He removes such ceremonial practice for the Christian - **Colossians 2:11-14** <sup>11</sup> In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup> buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. <sup>13</sup> And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together

with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, <sup>14</sup>having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Going back to such practices would mean Christ died in vain - **Galatians 4:9-11** <sup>9</sup>But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? <sup>10</sup>You observe days and months and seasons and years. <sup>11</sup>I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

Christians are not expected to dedicate ceremonially houses, children, business e.t.c.

Going to denominations' child dedication or Feast of Dedication is spiritual adultery and sinful - **James 4:4** Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

**1 Corinthians 6:9** <sup>9</sup>Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites.

A devoted faithful Christian life full of prayers is sufficient enough as objective dedication to Christ and His church.

## **The Ceremonial Christian Feast**

In the church purchased by the blood of Christ, He allowed a feast celebrated weekly called *The Lord's Supper*. The festival is specific in all ramifications - **Matthew 26:26-30** <sup>26</sup>And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." <sup>27</sup>Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. <sup>28</sup>For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. <sup>29</sup>But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." <sup>30</sup>And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** <sup>23</sup>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; <sup>24</sup>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." <sup>25</sup>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." <sup>26</sup>For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. **Acts 20:7** <sup>7</sup>Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.



## **CONCLUSION**

Dedication feast is not ordained of God. Dedication is a practice of Jews. God expects the firstborn to be dedicated or set apart for Him. Christ has removed dedication of someone or something from Christian practices. Christians are not to perform dedication ceremonially but live a devoted Christian life by avoiding spiritual adultery of feasting with denominations.