

Baptism's Deeper Meaning

Baptism is undoubtedly the most important decision one can make on this earth. Because our future is determined by it, we should be alert to all its conditions and significance. In the following study we will seek a deeper meaning of baptism according to Yahweh's Word. We should comprehend what baptism accomplishes and seek to ensure our baptism is approved by Yahweh. Furthermore, we should know what to expect upon being baptized, for it is the foundation-stone of the promised salvation given us through our Savior Yahshua.

From time to time we all have realized how far we have fallen from the high expectations of Yahweh's Word, and felt we were the lost generation much like those to whom Peter was preaching. When the Jews in Acts chapter two realized it was their sins which put the Savior to death, they asked, "What can we do?" *Then Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Yahshua Messiah for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as Yahweh our Elohim shall call,"* Acts 2:38-39. The **Authorized Version** (AV) 1769 edition, translated from the 1611 version, is used throughout, unless otherwise noted.

Baptism in the Only Name

Most baptisms done throughout churchianity are done in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). However, not one of these is a name, but only a title. There are many "fathers" on this earth, and all of us have a human father. Fathers are also sons, as are all males. The Holy Spirit is the power emanating from Yahweh, and shared by the Son. A number of scholars believe this verse is spurious, including the **The New Jerusalem Bible** (NJB) produced by the Catholics. (For a deeper study of this verse, request your copy of our mini-study, **Trinitarian Baptism and Matthew 28:19**).

Other church groups baptize in the name of "Jesus," a meaningless name by which the Savior was never called in His life. It certainly is improper to be baptized into a name that did not exist until after 1611, when the letter "J" came into being. We have restored the Name YAHSHUA which was given Him directly from the Heavens. It is the same as "Joshua" in the **King James**. The name "Jesus" is a hybrid from the Latin and Greek which is explained in our mini-study, **How the Savior's Name Was Changed**. If you don't have this eye-opening information, request your copy today!

Baptisms in the book of Acts were done in the Name of the Savior Yahshua, not Jesus. (For further information, write for our mini-study **Why Be Baptized Into the Name of Yahshua?**). The Bible clearly tells us that salvation is in the Name of Yahshua only. *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,* Acts 4:12.

Why are we making so much of a proper baptism? As already mentioned above, baptism is the most important event in your life! Baptism has a bearing upon what you will be doing until the Savior returns and where you will spend eternity. Baptism is the doorway to everlasting eternity and to a life that is out of this world. All the promises made to Abraham and his Seed

culminate in the person of Yahshua Messiah. It is through Him that we have this present life, plus the greater promises in the life yet to come. Paul himself stated all the promises made to Abraham come only through Yahshua. Upon baptism into Yahshua's Name we become a part of His body and are then partakers of those promises. *Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Messiah*, Galatians 3:16.

The Savior's Example

Yahshua came to be baptized by John the Baptist (Immerser). John felt he himself should be the one to be baptized and questioned why the Savior deemed His own baptism necessary. His reply was to fulfill all righteousness, for an example to us! Notice, *Then cometh Yahshua from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of Him. But John forbad Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" And Yahshua answering said unto him, "Suffer [it to be so now], for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Then he suffered Him. And Yahshua, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of Yahweh descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him*, Matthew 3:13-16.

Notice that Yahshua's baptism is an example that we might follow in His footsteps. Because He submitted to being immersed, so should we also. It was at this time the Holy Spirit descended upon Yahshua. Being now filled with the Holy Spirit, Yahshua could begin His 3½ year ministry. No doubt the Savior was well versed in the Scriptures being taught by His mother Mary and Joseph. He was able to discuss the deeper things of the Word with the priests when He was about 13, ready for His "*Bar Mitzvah*" (Son of the Covenant), Luke 2:42-49. Yet, it was following baptism that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Savior in its fullness and He became fully prepared for the task of proclaiming the Evangel.

Laying on of Hands

By the laying on of hands following baptism we are also given the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the invisible power of Yahweh which is given to us. His indwelling Spirit gives us a new direction in our lives and draws us closer to Him. Our goals and attitudes are changed and we no longer defer to the pull of the flesh. A strong, spiritual outlook is given us which binds us together with those seeking the narrow way.

The indwelling Holy Spirit draws us closer to Yahweh in thought and deed, and we find our interest is now in a greater movement. We become a part of the growing body of the Messiah, the body of believers, which make up the called out ones (Greek *ekklesia*) who hunger for fellowship and who are also seeking to mature into the image and likeness of the Savior. To each believer baptized into the body is given a spiritual gift from Yahweh to be used for the benefit of the Assembly.

The laying on of hands is found in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 34:9 relates the passing of leadership from Moses to Joshua was through Moses' laying his hands on Joshua. Thus, the wisdom and leadership abilities Yahweh had given Moses were now passed on to Joshua.

Baptisms are carried out by the Presbytery (the Elders), responsible for the guidance of the Assembly and better able to discern who is ready for baptism. Baptism, followed by the laying

on of hands, acknowledges the acceptance of the baptized convert into the body of Messiah, is also an important practice by which we become Yahweh's spiritual sons and daughters and are given spiritual gifts for strengthening, expanding, and making the *ekklesia* the true body of believers. Notice the following account in which the Holy Spirit was given only when the Apostles Peter and John laid hands upon the baptized ones: *Then laid they [their] hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money* [Simon Magus was an infidel], Acts 8:17-18.

Paul reminds Timothy to be ever mindful of the presence within, of the Holy Spirit: *Do not neglect the gift in you, which was given you by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the body of elders* (presbytery), 1 Timothy 4:14 **Modern King James Version** (MKJV). Furthermore, Paul reminds Timothy to revive the gift of the Spirit from Yahweh which was given him by the laying on of Paul's hands, *Therefore I remind you to inflame anew the gift of Yahweh, which is in you by the putting on of my hands*, 2 Timothy 1:6 MKJV.

Gifts of the Spirit

While there are different gifts, they are all from the same source, Yahweh's Spirit. The gifts are manifestations of the Holy Spirit functioning in different workings, different tasks, different operations, but all are to be used to the advantage of the Assembly. Paul sums up the matter as follows, *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, [being] many, are one body in Messiah, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, [let us wait] on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, [let him do it] with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. [Let] love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. [Be] kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another*, Romans 12:4-10.

Some misguided, have the concept that upon baptism one would be given the gift of tongues. They have been told that "speaking in tongues" is the **proof** one has the Holy Spirit. However, tongues appears to be the least of the gifts. Paul clearly states that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are to be used to up build, strengthen, encourage, teach, guide, and help the body of believers to attain the sterling and loving character that the Head of the body, Yahshua Himself, displayed.

There are a number of spiritual gifts which members of the body of Messiah are given and the pericope of Romans 12 mentioned above shows there are eight gifts given to the saints. Paul describes the body of believers as a living, organic unity. Each member of the body is given gifts to be used properly and not abused within the framework of love by which sin and evil are overcome with good. At every turn, Paul urges we all have love for the brethren to show true humility in dealing with the problems that arise.

The Power of His Blood

Romans, chapter six, is certainly one of the clearest explanations concerning baptism's effectiveness and the results it achieves for us. This exposition of baptism is perhaps one of the most profound ever given. Paul raises the question: If we are forgiven our sins because of the grace of Yahweh, should we sin all the more so grace will be even greater? *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? Let it not be! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it,* Romans 6:1-2 MKJV.

Paul answers his own question by asking, "If we have died to sin through baptism, why should we go back to sinning again?" He makes the point that as Yahshua died, we also symbolically died by entering the watery grave of baptism. We are then cleansed from our sins and are to overcome and abstain from future sin.

Resurrected to Newness of Life

Just as Yahshua was dead and placed in the tomb, through baptism, we spiritually identify with His death in dying to the old way of life. We turn from our old ways of the past and seek to walk on higher ground as we follow in His footsteps. *Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Yahshua were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, so that as Messiah was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father; even so we also should walk in newness of life,* Romans 6:3-4 MKJV.

When Yahshua arose from the tomb, His body was changed to spirit. He moved through walls, entered rooms without coming through the doors; He appeared before witnesses and then disappeared from them. All this He could do because He now had a glorified body. "The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:14) and because His blood was shed for you and me, blood was no longer coursing through His veins.

Now Yahshua had Spirit energy flowing through His veins which gave Him the resplendent picture found in (Rev. 1:13-16). He is a bright, shining individual whose face shines forth like the noonday sun. Just as He is a changed individual and no longer hindered by the flesh, so we upon being baptized into His Name, are no longer living with our desires governed by the material world. Our thoughts are now on a higher plane where Yahshua and Yahweh think and act. We think in the spiritual realm.

Old Things Pass Away, All Things Become New

For if we have been joined together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is [impaled] with Him in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, that from now on we should not serve sin, Romans 6:5-6 MKJV.

When we come up out of the watery grave we will still be human and have to face human problems. The person we once were, has been impaled with Messiah, but our attitude has been changed. The difference is that we have a new outlook on life, and have Yahweh's Spirit within which strengthens us. Paul says "the body of sin might be destroyed," that is, the old nature is inoperative (Rom. 6:6). We now can call upon Yahweh's help to overcome our own shortcomings and the wiles of the Tempter. *For he who died has been justified from sin. But if*

we died with Messiah, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that when Messiah was raised from the dead, He dies no more; death no longer has dominion over Him, Romans. 6:7-9 MKJV.

The **New English Bible** (NEB) renders verse 7, *A dead man is no longer answerable for his sin.* Death pays all debts, so the man who has died with Messiah has his slate wiped clean, and is ready to begin his new life with Messiah, his past forgotten. Upon arising from the baptismal waters, one's past is washed away; he is a new creature, as Paul emphasizes, *So that if any one is in Messiah, that one is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new,* 2 Corinthians 5:17 MKJV.

No matter what sins he has committed, or what commandment he has broken, the past is forgotten. This also includes divorce and remarriage. If such sins are not washed away, then Messiah's sacrifice is not the cleansing blood the Bible says it is. Paul emphasizes, *For in that He died, He died to sin once; but in that He lives, He lives to Yahweh. Likewise count yourselves also to be truly dead to sin, but alive to Yahweh through Yahshua Messiah our Sovereign,* Romans 6:10-11 MKJV.

One Spirit, Many Gifts

Paul goes into detail describing the body of Messiah which he likens to the physical human body. The brethren making up the body of Messiah have various talents and gifts all of which complete the body and make it function smoothly.

The body of Messiah, the *ekklesia*, is made up of brethren elected of Yahweh to receive the various gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12) needful for the body. *But there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of ministries, but the same Sovereign. And there are differences of workings, but it is the same Elohim working all things in all. But to each one is given the showing forth of the Spirit to our profit. For through the Spirit is given to one a word of wisdom; and to another a word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; and to another faith by the same Spirit; and to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; and to another workings of powers, to another prophecy; and to another discerning of spirits; and to another kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues. But the one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing separately to each one as He desires,* 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 MKJV.

He emphasizes in chapter 13, that agape love is the more excellent way. Evidently there were some Corinthian brethren who mistakenly assumed ecstatic speech was favored, which encouraged many to attempt to acquire that gift. Paul clarifies that every gift is important and needed for the good of the body, the *ekklesia*, made up of many different people with diverse backgrounds. But all have the same goal which is to be in the Kingdom. We are to help others along the way, as we seek to be kings and priests in the Kingdom (Rev. 5:10).

Unity in Diversity

With the various members having their own gift for *ekklesia*, it is necessary the members work together as a body or as a well-oiled machine. We are not to allow differences to divide us, but to forbear one another, knowing that we are to tolerate each member of the body, for Yahweh has placed each one in the assembly as He saw fit. *For as the body is one and has many members,*

and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Messiah. For also by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, even all were made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, "Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body;" is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, "Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body;" is it therefore not of the body? If all the body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If all hearing, where would be the smelling? But now Yahweh has set the members, each one of them, in the body as it has pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where would be the body, 1 Corinthians 12:12-19 MKJV.

Yahweh Sets Those in the Assembly

Again, Paul emphasizes that each baptized member of the assembly will likely have a different gift and goes to some length to make his point. He indicates that even the most humble parts of the body are necessary. We are to strive after the better gifts, and to do so with agape love. *And Yahweh set some in the assembly, firstly, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers, then works of power, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, kinds of languages. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of power? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak languages? Do all interpret? But zealously strive after the better gifts. And yet I show to you a more excellent way, 1 Corinthians 12:28-31 MKJV.* Paul then goes on to give his classic exposition of agape love found in 1st Corinthians chapter 13.

Gifts are Given to the Assembly

Ephesians 4:8-9 tell of Yahshua's ascending up on high after His death and resurrection and gave special gifts unto mankind. Then follows the various gifts He has given to the Assembly, His body, for which He died. These are gifts for guidance and leadership of the Assembly. First mentioned is the office of apostles. However, this has been fulfilled as the apostles were to have seen the risen Messiah (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 15:7-8; 2 Cor. 12:12) and Paul was the last, having seen Yahshua on the Damascus road (Acts 9).

A prophet in the New Testament was considered one who received a direct message from Yahweh Himself and then delivered it to those concerned. This was before the New Testament was written, and such guidance was needed by the infant *ekklesia*. There are a number of examples such as, "In Antioch... Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them" (Acts 15:32).

Since we now have the completed New Testament, most scholars feel the prophets and apostles are not as needful today as when the early assembly was getting started. But evangelists, pastors and teachers are indeed a part of needful guidance of the *ekklesia*. *And truly He gave some to be apostles, and some to be prophets, and some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Messiah. And this until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of Yahweh, to a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah; so that we no longer may be infants, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, in the dishonesty of men, in cunning craftiness, to the wiles of deceit. But that you, speaking the truth in love, may in all things grow up to Him Who is the Head, even Messiah;*

from whom the whole body, fitted together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of each part, producing the growth of the body to the edifying of itself in love, Ephesians 4:9-16 MKJV.

Feeding His Body

It is clear that those immersed into the body of Messiah become a part of His body and are to interact and work with brethren of like faith. We are not baptized and then expected to be aloof from the body of Messiah! Baptism is the door to become an active part of the body of Messiah. We are not to go off in the woods somewhere in a hermit-like existence without staying in contact with those in the body of Messiah.

We are a part of the body no matter where we are and we should have the same love and concern for the Assembly as Yahshua does. He essentially said that evil would not overtake us (Matt. 16:18). We should do what we can to strengthen, encourage, help, and make the Assembly a focal point of our prayers for its spiritual and physical well-being. With letters, email, phone calls and visits, this can be done more easily today than at any time in history. A growing number seek the truth of the Bible, ignoring the pagan practices that have crept into the customs of churchianity. Yahshua has believers all around the world.

We have a great opportunity to reach the lost sheep around the world who also seek deeper truth. From third-world countries, many contact us through the internet from their place of employment, a library, or a friend. We strive to reach out to those who have expressed interest in Yahweh's Name and His way of life. We send literature, DVDs, CDs, and our magazine freely to all continents worldwide. Sending these things overseas gets to be costly, but is a necessary expense for most are unable to be a help to us or their countrymen. We feel compelled to help those requesting literature even though their financial situation is poor. This is in fulfillment of the great commission (Matt. 28:19-20) to reach out to all nations with the Good News. The more people we reach and instruct in Yahweh's truth, the more glory He gets and His blessings flow throughout the world. This is likely what Yahshua was referring to, when He said, *And the King shall answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you have done it to Me." Then He also shall say to those on the left hand, "Depart from Me..." And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life,* Matthew 25:40-41, 46 MKJV.

Conclusion

We conclude our study with the following summation concerning Baptism:

- True baptisms are done in Yahshua's saving Name, placing us in the body of Messiah.
- "Baptism" is from the Greek word *baptizo* meaning to immerse, "dip, or soak into a liquid so what is dipped takes on the qualities of what it is dipped into; for example, cloth in dye, or leather in tanning solution," *David Stern's New Testament Commentary*, Matt. 3:1, p. 15.
- Pouring (Greek *cheo*), sprinkling (Greek *rantizo*), spraying are not baptisms (burials).
- All baptisms in Scripture were done by the presbytery, or those specially called of Yahshua.
- Baptism is a sacred and serious event, entered into carefully and joyfully.

- Baptisms *not* done in the saving Name of Yahshua are a type of John's baptism of repentance (Acts 19:1-5); done in sincerity, but lacking the full knowledge now available. Only baptisms into Yahshua's Name are baptisms of salvation.
- Spiritual gifts are given at baptism through the laying on of hands of the Elders.

Therefore, one should seek to exercise his gift with a body of believers that is Biblically sound and continues reaching out to others. Join the brethren of Yahweh's Assembly in Yahshua as together we strive to be in Yahshua's coming Kingdom.

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