

The Purpose And Meaning of Baptism

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The Bible uses the Greek, ([baptisma](#)) it literally means “immersion” or “dipping.” Though the word for baptism in Greek means immerse or dip, not all Christians use this mode when baptizing. Many sprinkle water on the head and some pour. We believe that immersion of the total body in water is the proper mode, not only because of the meaning of the word, but because the New Testament indicates that this was the mode followed by Messiah Yahshua and the early disciples. Also immersion best expresses the significance of baptism as the New Testament explains it. We believe that sprinkling and pouring came later as man made concessions by church leaders.

The History of Baptism

In the Tenach water was used ceremonially in rites of cleansing. Yahweh Elohim commanded His people of ancient Israel (Exodus 30:17 21) to build a bronze wash basin, and to place it before the Mishkan (portable Tabernacle) and later before the Temple. The priests cleansed themselves in the bronze wash basin before performing their services in the tabernacle and the temple. In a number of places in the Torah the people of Israel are commanded to purify themselves by washing their entire bodies in water after certain practices or contacts which are considered defiling. For example, a man who had a nocturnal emission or a woman who had her menstrual period or persons having bodily contact with such individuals during these times, were required by the Law to wash their bodies thoroughly in clean water (Leviticus 15:1 6,11:6 18 and Leviticus 22:4 6). It is clear from these passages and others like them that

water is regarded in the Tenach as signifying cleansing and a renewal of life from defilement.

Ceremonial washings with water for both humans and things is an ancient Jewish practice that existed before and after New Testament Biblical Times

Besides the ceremonial washings commanded by Yahweh for temple service and defilement of the flesh under Old covenant law, there is a great deal of ancient testimony that indicates that the Jewish people practiced many manmade washings and dippings in water as rituals. Not only were the bodies of people dipped and immersed in water but also household articles were as well. The practice of Netilat-Yadayeem – washing the hands before eating – is still practiced by traditional Jews. The Talmud and other rabbinical writings mention the practice of baptizing proselytes to Judaism. Water Baptism was a familiar practice among the Jewish people before the beginnings of Yahshua Messiah's Earthly ministry and following.

Baptism of new converts is a continuing Jewish practice

Moses Maimonides and other medieval rabbis mention the importance of baptizing proselytes. In addition, the practice of tevilah, ritual cleansing and purification in a pool of water, has been practiced among Orthodox Jews up to the present times. Gentile converts to Judaism are still required to be baptized. The meaning of these rites in Judaism is that of cleansing and a new beginning.

Baptism in the New Testament

All of Messiah's followers are commanded to be immersed. The following scriptures show that baptism is involved in the matter of becoming a disciple of Yahshua the Messiah (commonly called "Jesus Christ"), and in obtaining salvation, and the remission of sins (i.e. the "sending

away”, or “dismissal.” of sins, as the word translated “remission” means). Matthew 28:18-20
“And Yahshua came and spake unto them, saying, ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

The word translated “teach”, in “teach all nations”, actually means “make a learner”, or “a disciple of”. Thus we see that to become a learner or disciple of Yahshua the Messiah we are to be baptized. Later we will see that the name He was referring to as the “name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” is, in fact, His own name - the name of Him to whom all power was now given. (Note that He did say “name of”, not “names of”.) So the first point is that you become a disciple of the Messiah by baptism in His name (as will be further shown). To baptize in the one name of the Triune Elohim, did not only mean a pronunciation of the personal Name, but also the authority and character of the Father, Son and Spirit that name represents in its meaning.

Acts 2:38 “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Yahshua the Messiah for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

To “repent” means to “change your mind”, in this case, from choosing to live for sin and self-gratification to choosing to live for Yahweh and His will. Both repentance and faith are to be expressed by baptism. Baptism, according to this passage, and others, is for the remission (or “sending away”) of sins.

As seen here, Peter understood that the “ name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” is actually the name of the Messiah, for he said to be baptized, “in the name of Yahshua the Messiah”. (The Father is Yahweh as He dwells in the heavens and manifests

Himself, from His infinity, in a form seen by angels, but invisible to human eyes. The Son is Yahweh as He made Himself known unto men, and became our Savior. The Holy Spirit is Yahweh as He comes in invisible Spirit presence to live inside of us. There is only one Almighty One, Yahweh, but He manifests Himself in three manifestations or modes of existence at the same time.)

The name whereby Yahweh has become known as our Savior is Yahshua, which name means "Yah-Savior", or "Yahweh our Savior". It is only as He became flesh as Immanuel (meaning "God with us", or "El with us") that He could save us. Acts 10:43, speaking of Yahshua, tells us, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 8:16 says, "they were baptized in the name of Yahshua the Messiah". In Acts 22:16, Paul was told, "And now why do you wait? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Master." In Acts 19:4,5 when the Ephesians heard that they should believe on the Messiah Yahshua, it says, "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Master, Yahshua." So it is very clear that the Savior's name is the name to use in baptism.

The prophet Joel had said in Joel 2:32 that in the last days "...whosoever shall call on the name of Yahweh shall be saved." Then Peter, speaking of Yahshua (whose name, as already pointed out, means "Yahweh our Savior") said this: "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Thus, since the Holy Spirit said by the prophet Joel (whose words Peter also quoted in Acts 2:21) that men are in these last days to be saved by calling on the name of Yahweh, and since there is salvation only in the name of the one who died for our sins, Yahweh's Son Yahshua, then the name of the Son must be the name of Yahweh (as Yahweh became our Savior in and through Him). Thus He is "Yahweh-Savior", which is what "Yah'shua" means. Therefore, we call upon His name for salvation by being immersed

in His name for the remission of sins.

The Meaning of Baptism

Baptism involves Repentance: The challenge of Simon Peter on the day of Shavuot was: repent and let each one of you be immersed in the name of Messiah Yahshua (Acts 2:38).

The idea of an unbaptized Believer is not entertained in the New Testament.

Baptism means Cleansing: Arise and be immersed, and wash away your sins, calling on His name (Acts 22:16). You will come out of the water a new creation, fresh, clean and eternally new. Keep your life clean by living for Messiah, and confessing your sins to Him and repenting if you sin.

Baptism means identifying with Messiah in His death, burial and resurrection: The baptized person acknowledges by this that he has chosen to turn completely away from his old life, characterized by sin and rebellion against Yahweh Elohim's will, and to turn completely toward the new life which Messiah offers. Going down into the water means death and burial and coming up out of the water as means resurrection. By being immersed the new Believer is saying: I was joined to Messiah when He was judged for sin and put to death. His death was my death. I die with Him. I was buried along with Him, and I am also joined to His resurrection. His resurrection is my resurrection. His eternal indestructible life is now my life. From now on you will be forever linked and identified with Yahshua. (See Romans 6:2-4, Ephesians 4:4-6, Colossians 2:12).

Baptism is a public declaration of your faith: when one is baptized he expresses, not only his union with the Messiah, but with all true believers and with the belief and truth which express Elohim's true revelation concerning man's salvation. The whole relationship of faith in

Messiah Yahshua is a total unity of which baptism is an integral part. (see Ephesians 4:4-6).

There is One Body (a true spiritual unity or family of all believers), one spirit (the Holy Spirit who gives spiritual life to every believer), one Lord (the Messiah), one faith (the one true living way of daily trusting Elohim and the one true body of truth related to that trust), one baptism (the one true ordinance given by the Lord Yahshua expressing this great unity) and one Elohim and Father of all.

Baptism means joining the Family or Community of Messiah: Not only are you identified with Messiah, but now you are a recognized part of His Church community both local and world wide. When we are baptized "in the name of Yahshua ['Yahweh our Savior'] for the remission of sins", we become identified with Him in His death as He died in our place. We are, thereby, declaring that since He died in our place we died with, or in, Him. We died to sin, to self, and to this present evil world which, since the fall of man, has been part of Satan's kingdom of darkness. By baptism in the Savior's name we become joined to Him in His death, by being joined to His name, and, thereby, separated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light - the kingdom of Yahweh's dear Son. Yes indeed, baptism is thus the official transference (of our citizenship) out of the kingdom of darkness (that we all are in before our sins are remitted) into the kingdom of Light (the kingdom of Yahweh). The prerequisites for such a transfer of citizenship are to hear and believe the gospel, and to repent (that is decide to turn to Yahweh by faith in His Son). Both of these, faith and repentance, are presupposed when one takes the step of being baptized in the name of Yahshua the Messiah for the remission of sins. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). Water Baptism is a picture of the spiritual reality that has already taken place, that the Spirit of Elohim has placed you into the Body of Messiah, His holy

community. By being immersed you will follow in a long line of Jewish and Gentile saints and holy men and woman of Elohim going back to 2000 years to Messiah Yahshua Himself. Take your full place in Messiah's body and be a faithful member of our community.

Baptism means a New Beginning: Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you – not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to Yahweh Elohim for a good conscience through the resurrection of Messiah Yahshua (1 Peter 3:21). Just as Noah and his family were brought safely through the waters of the Flood, we can be brought to safety and experience salvation by following Yahshua, who is like the Ark, and by being immersed in water, the water of baptism. Peter makes it clear that the water baptism alone is only a symbol, a type, a picture. Baptism itself, getting immersed in water, doesn't actually save you – it only removes dirt from your body by making you wet! What really saves you is faith in the reality which being immersed is a symbol of – asking Yahweh Elohim to give you a good conscience that will now continue to obediently do what is right, say the right things, and live the right way.

The Baptism of Yahshua

Matthew 3: **13**Then Yahshua came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. **14**John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" **15**But Yahshua answered him, "Let it be so now, **for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**" Then he consented. **16**And when Yahshua was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him,^b and he saw the Spirit of Elohim descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; **17**and behold, a voice from heaven said, "**This is my beloved Son,^c with whom I am well pleased.**"

Messiah Yahshua was immersed before He started His public ministry (Matthew 3:13-17,

John 1:28-34). His baptism was His declaration to Israel that He was prepared to begin His ministry.

Baptism is asking Elohim for a new beginning, a fresh start, that you will now put Elohim the Father and Messiah Yahshua at the very center of your mind, heart and soul, and do things Yahweh's way. What is the basis that enables us to get this good conscience? Yahshua's resurrection from the dead! His real and historical death, and His real and historical resurrection, when combined with our faith in Him, enables us through His Holy Spirit to get a good conscience, to experience atonement, be forgiven for all of our sins, and to start doing the things that really please Yahweh Elohim, and head in the right direction.

What Baptism Alone Does Not do, Baptism in Faith Does

Again, Baptism alone does not save. You must have true faith for it to serve the purpose it is to fulfill in (1 Peter 3:21). "The like figure whereunto baptism does even now save us (not the putting away of the dirt of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward Yahweh,) by the resurrection of Yahshua the Messiah.

In this passage the apostle Peter is comparing baptism to the water of Noah's day by saying that baptism, as the like figure to that water, "even now saves us". Remember Hebrews Chapter 11: 7 "By faith Noah, being warned of Elohim of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

James 2:14 "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

By faith, the obedient work of Baptism saves us by giving us a good conscience before Yahweh, and does so by faith in the death burial and resurrection of Yahshua the Messiah from the dead.

Hebrews 10:22 "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

In this passage we find out that we can have full assurance of faith when our hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience (by the blood of the Lamb being applied to our hearts by faith, of course). That this is done in baptism is seen by the fact that it then says, "and our bodies washed with pure water." This is a definite reference to baptism. Like the passage in I Peter that we read earlier, it shows that baptism saves, not by some mystical effect, but by giving us a clear conscience toward Yahweh. It is in baptism, in other words, that our consciences are "sprinkled" with the blood of the Lamb of Yahweh who takes away the sin of the world. Yahshua's blood cleanses our hearts from our evil works or sins, when we believe the gospel and, therefore, respond by being immersed in His name "for the remission of sins."

Galatians 3:26 "For you are all the children of Yahweh by faith in the Messiah Yahshua. For as many of you as have been baptized into the Messiah have put on the Messiah."

Baptism is that expression of faith, or act of faith, which officially makes us children of the Almighty. We are baptized into Him and, thereby, put Him on.

Romans 6:3-5 "Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Yahshua the

Messiah were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as the Messiah was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.”

We see here that we are put into the Messiah by baptism. We are made partakers of His death, which was as our substitute for sin (“for the wages of sin is death”), by baptism into His death. “We shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection”, we are told, “if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death”, that is, if we are “buried with Him by baptism.”

Again, it is not the washing of water from the body that saves you, it is the humble and obedient appeal to Elohim for a good conscience. Messiah Yahshua saved you already when you first believed or had faith in Him as Savior and repented unto His Lordship over your life. Baptism is a picture of what Yahshua has already done for you, and an evidence of obedient commitment and prayer for Him to continue to save you in your life long commitment to follow Him no matter what.

Mark 16:15,16 “And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.”

Here we see that salvation is tied not only to believing the gospel, but also to responding to it by being baptized when you do believe. Baptism, as we will see later on, is actually the way Yahweh has given as the initial evidence of faith in the gospel. When you hear the gospel, or good news, that the Son of Yahweh died for our sins, was buried, and rose again, if you believe it, and are baptized you “shall be saved.” The gospel, or the good news, is that

Yahweh's Son died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day having been seen alive by many witnesses (many of whom suffered the loss of everything, even life itself, to tell what they saw of a resurrected Savior). This passage in Mark gives the promise of the Savior that when this good news is preached the person who believes it and responds by being baptized will then "be saved". So baptism is clearly very closely connected with becoming saved according to this passage of scripture.

Just as physical circumcision was the sign of being a member of Yahweh's chosen people (the children of Israel) under the Old Covenant, so circumcision of the heart is required to be a member of Yahweh's chosen people (called "the Israel of Yahweh" in Gal. 6:16) under the New Covenant. In Colossians chapter 2 the apostle Paul speaks of Yahshua and says in verses 9 & 10, "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Deity bodily, and you are complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power."

Next He says "In whom you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Messiah" (verse 11). Then, in the next verses (12 & 13) he explains where and how this circumcision (of the "putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh") takes place. He goes on by saying, "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of Yahweh, who has raised Him from the dead. And you, having been dead in yours sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he now made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

So, we see that baptism (which means immersion, or burial) is the way Yahweh gives in His word for us to accept the death of our Savior on Calvary as being the substitute for our own punishment for sins. In it our sins are legally remitted or sent away. When we really believe the good news that He died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day, we can

accept Him as our Savior by being immersed in His name for the remission of sins. Our faith in Him must be such that by this act of immersion in His name we give our selves to Him completely as those who died in His death and rose with Him into newness of life by His resurrection power.

Then, the rest of our life is an ongoing process of learning how to walk in the life of the risen, living Savior who by the enabling of His indwelling Holy Spirit leads us on to become like Him through His word, the Bible, and the pastoral leadership that He puts into our lives. Walking in this light of the gospel wherein we see Yahweh's hatred of sin, but love for the sinner and the power of the new life of Yahweh in the Messiah Yahshua is the way of eternal life. The wonderful thing is that if we have given ourselves to Him, by being buried with Him in baptism, and are honestly seeking to learn how to live for Him and to grow in the grace and knowledge He gives, we are accepted by Yahweh. That kind of life is called "walking in the light". While we are so walking the blood of Yahshua the Messiah, His Son, keeps on washing us from our sins so that we have the assurance of everlasting life. (I John 1:7)

So it should be clear that baptism in the name of the Savior for the remission of sins is Yahweh's plan for His people. It is required of them, and, therefore, should not be delayed any longer than absolutely necessary. Once we learn of the correct form of His name (as it contains the Father's name, as He is restoring it to the knowledge of His people today) then we are responsible for that additional light as well. It should rejoice our hearts to be baptized in the name of Yahweh as He became our Savior, even the name of Yahshua the Messiah.

Baptism is to be administered to those who are able to consciously exercise repentance and belief: hence, not little children below an age of accountability. Anyone can be saved as long as they believe unto repentance and are baptized. Without belief unto repentance, Baptism alone just makes you a wet and lost sinner. See Mark 1:15, 16:16, Acts 2:38 39.

If you are Jewish, baptism is not a renunciation of your Jewish identity, since you are now a loyal subject of Yahshua, the King of the Jews, but the fulfillment of it. Ezekiel 36: 24 For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and hay-vaytee et-chem el ah-dah-mat-chem – bring you into your own land. Notice that this Land is specifically designated for the Jewish people in it). In spite of being an embarrassment to Yahweh Elohim during their exile among the nations, profaning Yahweh's name, causing disrepute to the Elohim of Israel's reputation, the gracious Elohim will nevertheless demonstrate to the nations, that He is holy, reliable, and trustworthy, by taking us out of the Exile, and returning us to our own land. He can be counted on to keep His promises, even if His people can't. Let's call this **Phase One**: physical Israel's physical restoration to the Land.

Next comes **Phase Two**: Israel's spiritual restoration to Elohim: Ezekiel 36:25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Next Yahweh Elohim promises to sprinkle the Jewish people with clean water. The sprinkling of water is a symbol for spiritual cleansing. Whereas they were unclean, this sprinkling will bring cleansing, cleansing from all their filthiness and from all their idols. There will be a turning away from the idols of false religion that the Jewish people have adopted, which I can only understand to mean the Judaism of the rabbis – all non-Messianic Judaism, and other non-biblical influences that we have followed: perhaps the new age and eastern philosophies that are becoming more prevalent today, the philosophical ideas of Darwinism and evolution that are so unbiblical and destructive.

This New Covenant spiritual restoration to Elohim includes not only physical Jews who at the return of our Messiah will experience as a nation the future restoration of national spiritual rebirth; but even we who were once Gentiles that believe unto obedient repentance will go through a spiritual rebirth: Ezekiel 36:26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new

spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh". . This is the promise of the New Birth, spiritual regeneration, new life from above, a new -desire to love, follow and serve Yahweh Elohim that comes from the heart.

Whereas with the new Spirit of Yahshua Messiah received in their hearts, both Jews and Gentiles who before had a heart of stone – tough, hard hearted toward Elohim, in humble repentance, their hearts will finally and truly be soft, malleable, tender towards Yahweh our Elohim.

36:27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. We are promised the indwelling presence of Ruach Elohim – the Spirit of Elohim. Yahweh will place His Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, within us, and we will suddenly find ourselves with a new desire to please Yahweh, a new desire to serve Yahweh, a new awareness that we need to be careful to observe Yahweh's ordinances, not the man made traditions and laws that the rabbis have imposed. Then we will really do Yahweh's chukkim – statutes, and His mishpatim – His ordinances – and not the false teachings of the non-Messiah Yahshua denying rabbis of the Galut. Then we will really do Elohim's chukkim – statutes, and His mishpatim – His ordinances – and not adhere to the pagan ideologies and philosophies of the nations, like evolutionism. Then the Spirit of Yahweh Elohim Himself will be our rabbi, and He will guide us into all truth. We will do and fulfill Yahweh's Torah – not man-made rabbinic interpretations.

Other Forms of Baptism

In addition to water baptism, the New Testament also mentions baptism with the Holy Spirit (see Matthew 3:11, John 1:33 and 3:5, and Acts 1:5) and baptism with fire (Matthew 3:11 12, Luke 3:16 17, and Mark 9:42 43 and 47 48). The baptism in or with the Holy Spirit refers to

the Spirit of Elohim entering into the life of a believer, giving him new life at the time he places true faith in Messiah. The baptism of fire refers to the purging of Elohim's judgment, either to separate what is ungodly out of the life of a true believer or to separate unbelievers from believers at the last judgment. These "baptisms" are in addition to, and not in place of, water baptism.

Order of Service for Baptism

Having already taught the convert, according to scripture, I recommend that baptism be done by total immersion not just sprinkling. As the fellow believer's sing a song we have the new devotee step down into the water.

I may start by asking the new convert to communicate why they are taking this step. I may ask the person being baptized if they believe in Yahweh Elohim, and that Yahshua is the Messiah, the son of Elohim and Lord, and if He died and rose again, and if they are committing the rest of their life to serve Him as Elohim. At this time a testimony by the one being baptized may be given. I may then allow other elders or select people of the congregation to pray for those being baptized.

Before doing the immersion, I may pray the following prayer: Baruch Ata Yahweh, Elohaynu Melech HaOlam, asher kidshanu b'Yahhsua HaMeshee ach, v'tzee vanu al ha tevilah.

Blessed are You, O Yahweh our Elohim, King of the universe, who has sanctified us through Yahshua the Messiah, and commanded us to be immersed. (Name of Person) I baptize you in the name of Yahshua the Messiah for the remission of sins; .

After the baptism, more prayer follows, "May the Holy Spirit fill this vessel" followed by a celebration. Singing!!!