

A New Look at Baptism

 sightedmoon.com/you-cannot-keep-torah-another-christian-lie-the-secrets-of-the-dome-of-the-rock-and-golgotha/

By Joseph F. Dumond

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News Letter 5847-023

19th day of the 5th month 5847 years after the creation of Adam
The 5th Month in the Second year of the third Sabbatical Cycle
The Third Sabbatical Cycle of the 119th Jubilee Cycle
The Sabbatical Cycle of Earthquakes Famines, and Pestilences

August 20, 2011

Shabbat Shalom Family,

Keep My Commandments by Mark Uraine

And if you like this article Mark has sent me the 175 references that mention to Keep the Commandments, I can forward them on to you.

This concept appears over 175 times in the Bible. It must be pretty important.

Psa 19:7 The Torah of ????? is perfect, bringing back the being; The witness of ????? is trustworthy, making wise the simple; 8 The orders of ????? are straight, rejoicing the heart; The command of ????? is clear, enlightening the eyes; 9 The fear of ????? is clean, standing forever; The right-rulings of ????? are true, They are righteous altogether, 10 More desirable than gold, Than much fine gold; And sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.

1Jn 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of Elohim, when we love Elohim and guard His commands. 3 For this is the love for Elohim, that we guard His commands, 1 and His commands are not heavy,

2Jn 1:6 And this is the love, that we walk according to His commands. 1 This is the command, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

Joh 14:15 "If you love Me, you shall guard My commands.

Exo 20:6 but showing kindness to thousands, to those who love Me and guard My commands.

Many a Christians will quickly quote to you that it is impossible to keep the old commandment law. There are too many or we do not have to keep them. They all say 'all you have to do is to love JESUS'.

So read again John 14:15 These Christians also do not understand what Yehshua meant when HE said in 1 John 2:4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

Is it possible to keep Torah?

Of course it's possible, in fact it's commanded of us. Many like to believe that God's law is too difficult and we often hear the false teaching that it's impossible to do. These people look at the 759 statutes, judgments, and commandments and feel overcome with a sense of helplessness. But then they turn around and willingly sign a state contract for a driver's license and commit themselves to over 2000 traffic laws. Does that sound logical? Just being a U.S. Citizen alone adheres us to over 2 million laws in the U.S. Code, and we can't follow the 759 laws of God?

Yes, the laws of God require a change of heart, a life commitment, and yes, it's OK to feel helpless. That's why our Father sent us the Holy Spirit to remind us of his promise and to comfort us when we're overwhelmed. The Holy Spirit guides us step by step into obedience under God. And obedience to God is found in his law.

759 laws – that's it! And many of those don't even apply nowadays. There are several that are specific for women and approximately 200 laws that directly deal with the temple and procedures of which cannot be applied today because there is no temple. With this in mind, our ability to keep Torah has just increased by 33%.

Has anyone ever kept Torah?

Yes! The Bible provides many examples of people who kept Torah and followed it blamelessly. One such example are the parents of John the Baptist; Zacharias and Elisabeth.

Luke 1:6

And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

They walked in ALL the ordinances of God blamelessly! At this time in their lives they were not breaking any of his statutes, judgments, or commandments.

King Josiah was another individual who obeyed God and had the heart to keep his law.

2 Kings 23:25

And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.

Joshua and the Reubentites, Gadites, and half of the Mannassites were keeping all of God's law.

Joshua 22:1-6

1Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, 2And said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you:

3Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God.

4And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side Jordan.

5But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

6So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents.

Hezekiah, the King of Judah, did not depart from God's law.

2 Kings 18:6

For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses.

Isaiah 38:3

And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

And don't forget the many years that Israel remained under the mercy of God when entering the promised land. This was due to keeping Torah. It was only when they broke the law that they were punished.

As is shown there are many people who have kept the laws of God, and it might be a bit of encouragement to know there are people doing it today! So anyone teaching that we cannot follow God's law is teaching a false doctrine which is untrue and not from God.

But the Israelites weren't able to keep God's law

Actually, it's not that the Israelites weren't able to keep his law... it's that they willfully chose not to. God longed for their heart because he knew, if they loved him with all their heart, they would be obedient to him. Deuteronomy 5:29

O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!

God originally wanted this law to be in their hearts. But the people were too rebellious. Deuteronomy 6:6

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

Psalm 78:5-8

5For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:

6That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children:

7That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:

8And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.

This is why God himself has now written his law on our hearts! And now we may love God, and prove this love in obedience to his law.

John 14:15

If ye love me, keep my commandments.

No way, it's just not possible

This is true. Without the help of Yahshua, we will likely fail. This has been ingrained in us from early on. We've been taught adamantly that we cannot follow his law, and so now we will fail.

But what does scripture say?

Matthew 19:26

But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Mark 9:23

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

And there is the key. With Yahshua, we can overcome, we can love God through obedience, and we can keep Torah.

So then what do we do next? What is the next step we need to take once we repent from not keeping Torah?

<http://hope-of-israel.org.nz/baptism.htm>

Hope of Israel Ministries (Ecclesia of YEHOVAH):

A NEW LOOK At Baptism

How should "baptism" be administered? How should it be performed? The Greek word for baptism, baptizo, means "to make whelmed," or "fully wet." It means, literally, "to dip repeatedly, to immerse, submerge." How should this be done? Should you be "re-baptized"?

In ancient Judea, a person had to be in a state of ritual purity in order to enter into the Temple area. If a person had become ritually impure, he was required to undergo a ritual immersion in water — t'vilah in Hebrew. The apostle Paul, and early Jewish Christians, participated in this ritual (compare Acts 21:23-26; 24:18).

Archaeologists have discovered almost fifty ritual baths called mikva'ot — in the excavations around the southern wall of the Temple precincts.

The Judean ritual of purification by immersion, the mikva, is undoubtedly a forerunner of the practice of baptism. In ancient Judaism, a cleansed leper, a woman after her menstrual period, any ceremonially defiled person, and a Gentile convert to Judaism, had to undergo the mikva and be immersed in water, prior to being declared “pure” and able to enter the Temple, or reenter society.

The first mention of baptism, as such, was that of John the Baptist. He came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, calling upon people everywhere to repent of their sins, telling them the kingdom of heaven was at hand. “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins” (Matt. 3:5-6).

The Example Set by Yeshua the Messiah

Even Yeshua the Messiah came to John the Baptist to be baptized by him. “Then cometh Jesus 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 Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, 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 God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:13-17).

Yeshua set an example for each and every one of his true disciples and followers, to be baptized as he was (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). Baptism is a “type” of our complete “burial” of the “old man” who “dies” to the power of sin. As Paul wrote, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are BURIED with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ 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 [by being immersed in water through baptism], we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:3-6).

When we come up from the watery grave of baptism, a type of “death,” we are to live a new life to YEHOVAH God through the Messiah, even as Yeshua himself arose from the dead. As Paul continues: “For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but ALIVE unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments

of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:7-13).

Importance of Baptism

Physical baptism, as an outward “sign” of inward repentance toward YEHOVAH God and cleansing from sin, and the power of sin, is a requirement for salvation. It is no trivial matter. Although YEHOVAH certainly could save someone without baptism, if circumstances prohibited baptism being performed, nevertheless, YEHOVAH clearly commands baptism to be performed in all cases where it is possible! Yeshua commanded: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature [person]. He that believeth, and is BAPTIZED, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). On the first day of Pentecost, when YEHOVAH sent the holy spirit, and it came upon all the disciples, Peter preached to the assembled Judeans at the Temple during the Holy Day, “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

Luke, the early church historian, records, “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (v.41). Thousands were added to the Ecclesia, even as YEHOVAH God the Father called them through the holy spirit, they heard the word, believed, and were baptized.

But how was this act of “baptism” performed? When Yeshua began preaching the gospel of the kingdom of YEHOVAH God, calling people to repentance (Mark 1:13-14), those who responded were baptized. We read in the book of John: “When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Yeshua himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee” (John 4:1-2). Notice! Yeshua himself did not perform the ceremony, but he had instructed his disciples, and they were the ones doing the baptizing of new converts.

But again, how was this done? Obviously, it required an act of immersion or submergence under water — like the ancient mikvah. However, although a ritual bath could have been used, at times John the Baptist, and Yeshua and his disciples, used the Jordan River as a place to perform baptism. In another case, when Philip and an Ethiopian eunuch came to “a certain water,” the eunuch said, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (Acts 8:36). Philip replied, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” He answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ [Yeshuah Ha Moshiah, in Hebrew, or, Yesou Christo, in Greek] is the Son of God.” So they stopped the chariot, in which they were riding, “and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:37-39).

Old Testament Baptismal Types

A type of “baptism” is found in the Old Testament Scriptures. As the apostle Paul wrote, “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (I Cor. 10:1-2). These people were down in the Red Sea, although it was not touching them, but they were also under the “cloud.” This was a type of baptism. They were leaving “sin city,” or Egypt, as it were, and passing out of that country, where they were “free” from the fetters and shackles of Egypt (a picture of “sin”). It should be noted that they individually put themselves down into the passageway through the Red Sea. No man took them by the garments, or by the hand, and pushed, pulled, or shoved them. They did not on their own, under the guidance and direction of Moses.

In another example of “baptism” in the Old Testament Scriptures, we read the amazing story of Naaman the Syrian general who was a leper. The story is told in II Kings, chapter 5. Naaman came to Elisha the prophet to be cured of his leprosy, after hearing about him from an Israeli maid (vs. 2-3). He came “with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha” (v.9). Naaman was a very important man, obviously, a powerful and honorable general, the “captain of the host” of the Syrian army (v.1). Yet Elisha did not go out to meet him, as some might have thought a good thing to do to curry favor with the general. Rather, he merely sent a “message” to him, saying, “Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean” (v.10).

Naaman was angry, and turned away in a furious state of mind, feeling humiliated and treated with disdain. As he left, he said to his attendants, “Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me [the prophet did not even do that!], and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a smoldering rage. But his servants, of a wiser state of mind and not caught up in the “vanity trip” of the glamour and adulation and egotism of their master, humbly asked him, “My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather, then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?” (v.13).

Naaman got a hold of himself, controlled and subdued his emotions, and “took a chance.” We read the chronicle: “Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean” (II Kings 5:13-14).

The Hebrew word for “dipped” here is *tabal*, and means “to dip, plunge, immerse.” In this verse, Naaman “immersed himself” in the Jordan River seven times! And his leprosy was cleansed. He was healed! But because of his original prideful, somewhat arrogant attitude, he almost lost out on YEHOUAH’s blessing of healing, and almost condemned himself to leprosy for the rest of his life.

Naaman, like all of us, had to learn a lesson — that we must obey YEHOUAH, no matter what He says, or how silly or foolish it may seem in our own human eyes. For, as YEHOUAH says through His prophet Isaiah, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my

ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

The Mikvah in Ancient Yisra’ël

In ancient Israel, when a person became “unclean,” he or she was required to “bathe” themselves (see Lev. 15:5, 6, 7,8, etc.). When the High Priest on the Day of Atonement prepared to perform his duties, he was required first of all, before all else, to “wash his flesh in water” (Lev. 16:5), and then to put on the holy garments. Later the same day, after performing his major duties, involving the cleansing of the sanctuary, the sacrifice of the live goat, and the confession of sin over the Azazel goat, and banishing it into the wilderness, he was required once again to take off the linen garments, and to “wash his flesh with water” in the holy place, and put on his garments, and make an atonement for himself and for the people (v.22-24). The person who takes the Azazel goat into the desert also had to “bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp” (Lev. 16:26). Any person who ate something that died of itself, or that was torn by beasts, also had to “bathe himself in water,” and then would be ritually “clean” that evening (Lev. 17:15). Anyone who refused to do this would “bear his iniquity” (verse 16).

The sacrifice of the “red heifer” was a special rite performed only a total of 7 or 9 times during the history of Israel and Judah, till the destruction of the Temple. It was sacrificed on the Mount of Olives, facing the Temple to the west, at the very spot where Yeshua the Messiah himself was later crucified, the red heifer being a “type” of the sacrifice of the Messiah for our sins. The High Priest, upon completing the sacrificial ceremony, was required to “bathe himself in water, and afterward come into the camp” (Num. 19:7). The one who assisted the High Priest and who performed the actual killing of the red heifer, and who burned her flesh to ashes, also was required afterwards to “bathe his flesh in water” (v.8).

The word for “bathe” in these verses is the Hebrew word #7364 in Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, the word rachatz, and means literally “to wash oneself,” “to be washed.” When one was commanded to “wash” or “bathe” oneself, it required a total bath or immersion in water. For this purpose, the ritual baths, or mikvah, was used. The whole being of the person was to be submerged, immersed in, and overwhelmed with water. This ritual bath later became the ancestral “type” of the New Testament act of “baptism.”

Baptism — A Self-Administered Rite

Now, back to baptism. The ordinance of baptism is patterned after the ritualistic mikvah or sacred bath. The practice of ceremonial immersion, the forerunner of Christian baptism, was a “self-administered” baptism, in which the person, or priest, walked out into the bath, or pool, and then immersed himself (or herself). In light of this, Dr. Robert Lindsey of Jerusalem has suggested that John the Baptist himself did not actually “baptize” people, by putting his hands on them and pushing them under the water. Rather, the baptism was a self-administered procedure to which John bore witness and supervised. Similarly, in the Jewish ritual of the

mikvah, the person is forbidden to touch anyone else while in the baptismal pool or bath. Such touching would “contaminate” the process and render it “unclean” and unfit.

How does this relate to the Christian practice of baptism?

Yeshua the Messiah, John the Baptist, and the early apostles were all Judeans. They were well acquainted with the mikvah, and the rites of purification. It is undoubted therefore that baptism, which was based on and patterned on the mikvah purification ritual, should also be performed in a similar fashion, without human hands of another person interfering with the process. Baptism is literally between each man or woman and YEHOVAH God. It should be performed by the person himself, standing in water, and immersing himself! This should be done, of course, under the supervision of the one responsible for conducting the “baptism” ceremony — but without that person actually “laying hold” on the individual being baptized. Thus, the vast majority of so-called “Christian” baptisms performed down through the years have missed the point, and failed to fulfill this ritual in the strict sense of the word.

To have another human being plunging another beneath the water is contrary to YEHOVAH’s intent on two counts:

1) It interposes another human being between each person and YEHOVAH God: yet the word of YEHOVAH says, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5). For one man to literally “baptize” another interposes a fallible human being in the middle of this divine relationship.

2) It interferes with total and complete ritual purity and the symbolism of true and complete “baptism” or immersion: When one man “baptizes” another, pushing him below the water, wherever his hands touch the individual or the clothing of the individual, that spot is not “washed,” or “cleansed,” but is prevented from being touched by the water. But even more important, baptism is a purely voluntary act, which a person decides to do of his own free will. Therefore, for another person to “plunge him under the water” implies he needs human assistance to do this, and perhaps is even forced or coerced into doing it. This obstructs the “voluntary” nature of the act itself, and contradicts the whole sacred meaning of a person choosing to immerse themselves in the water, to become cleansed of sin, and to become spiritually “purified” in the sight of YEHOVAH God.

Baptism is a symbol of our “death” in the water, and being raised by YEHOVAH to newness of life. In true death, no human being would be touching us. Also, no human being can raise us up to live again, in newness of life — only YEHOVAH God and the Messiah can do that. Therefore, the symbolism is violated by a man plunging a person into the water, and then a man lifting us up out of the water.

How Baptism Should Be Performed

What is the purpose of a man, or minister of YEHOVAH God, “baptizing” another? Of course, ministers of YEHOVAH are commanded to “baptize” people who have repented of their sins. But what does this entail? What does it mean? How is it to be done?

Obviously, those in charge of the baptismal ceremony are actually there to SUPERVISE each candidate as they perform their own self-immersion, and to see to it that they do it properly, and go all the way under the water, in complete “burial.” They need not touch the individual or his or her clothing in carrying out such supervision. They merely need to be attentive, and to watch carefully, insuring that the person being baptized completely fulfills the requirement.

The candidate and the person “baptizing” should both go into the water, as John the Baptist did with Yeshua, and Philip did with the Ethiopian eunuch, and then on confession of sin and repentance, the candidate should gently lower themselves all the way beneath the water, in a sitting position, and then rise up from that position out of the water. How simple. How plain. How divine and pure and sensible.

Too many times I have seen churches, and ministers of various churches, try to inject themselves, and their systematic theology, into the lives of people, commanding them to be baptized their way, and only in their church, insinuating their self-proclaimed authority over the new Christians. In this way they bring them into a state of religious “bondage” and spiritual slavery to their dictatorial and dogmatic “authority.”

Such a system of baptism is definitely not YEHOVAH’s way.

Although we at Hope of Israel Ministries (Ecclesia of YEHOVAH) do not endorse the common type of baptism performed by most so-called “Christian” churches, we do not condemn the baptisms themselves, either. Rather, even though such baptisms may not have been “perfect,” in a technical sense, still, we believe YEHOVAH accepts them, and honors them, as real baptism, so long as the person being baptized at the time of baptism, knew and accepted Yeshua as the Messiah, and repented of their sins, and committed their lives entirely to Yeshua as his servants and followers, completely. The inward motivation and genuine sincerity of the individual accepting YEHOVAH God as Savior, and repenting of their sins, and giving their life over to Him in total surrender of self-will and one’s entire self, is the most important thing — not the “mechanics” of the baptism having been performed “perfectly.”

As Paul said to the Athenians, “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). We accept such baptisms as valid and do not require “re-baptism” in such cases. However, for those who would like to be baptized over again, as a sort of “confirmation ceremony,” that would be all right. Even as some married couples go through a “second” marriage ceremony, later on during their marriage, as a sort of “celebration” of their first marriage, even repeating the nuptial vows, and perhaps even having a “second honeymoon,” in the same manner it would not be wrong for a person who has been baptized once to undergo the ceremony again, at a later time, as a “celebration” of their baptism, and as a “confirmation” of it.

The Laying on of Hands

In addition to being baptized in water, we also read about another part of the baptism process in the Scriptures. It is often referred to as the “laying on of hands.” What is this, and is it also necessary for a person to receive the holy spirit?

We read in Acts 8 of Philip preaching the gospel, and baptizing people in Samaria, performing great signs and miracles. The account in the book of Acts continues, “When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they PRAYED FOR THEM that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:14-17).

Why hadn't they received the holy spirit when Philip baptized them? Here was a man who even did miracles, signs and wonders, and yet the people had not received the holy spirit after they were baptized. If all that was needed was the “laying on of hands,” then why hadn't Philip done this himself?

Two points we need to notice here: First, Philip preached the gospel vigorously, but he had not been ordained as an elder or minister. Furthermore, the gospel was being preached in a NEW AREA, where it had never gone before. Therefore, Philip did not have sufficient authority to “lay hands” on the new disciples so they would receive the holy spirit. Only the apostles at this time had such authority. No doubt that is why he did not perform this simple function. He could preach and even baptize, but he did not have authority to “lay on hands” so another could receive the holy spirit.

The account continues, “When Simon [Magus, the magician] saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the APOSTLES' HANDS, he offered them money and said, ‘Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit’” (verses 18-19). Simon Magus recognized that the apostles had the authority to lay on hands, so that people could receive the holy spirit. He lusted after his power for himself, so Peter rebuked him for his evil attitude of trying to “buy” this power (verses 20-24).

This power to “lay on hands” so that people would receive the spirit of YEHOVAH God was only given to the apostles (or ordained ministers) at that time.

Is the laying on of hands necessary, then, when a person is baptized?

The answer is that if a person who is overseeing the baptizing is not sufficiently qualified, for YEHOVAH God to use to give the baptized individual the holy spirit, then it is necessary for another qualified individual to “lay hands” on the baptized person. Some people may be qualified to counsel a repentant person, and to baptize them, but not qualified to “lay hands” on them, because they are not ministers of YEHOVAH God, but only a “lay person” in YEHOVAH's Ecclesia.

On the other hand, if a true minister of YEHOVAH God, or an apostle or prophet, supervises the baptism of a person, it is evident that such people do NOT always need the laying on of

hands — because YEHOVAH honors the baptismal authority of such individuals. When Cornelius and his household received YEHOVAH's spirit, even before they were baptized, Peter had them baptized anyway as a symbol of their repentance and conversion — but they were not required to have hands laid on them, because they already had the holy spirit.

Therefore, the only reason why baptism itself had not been sufficient when Philip oversaw the baptism of the new believers in Samaria was he had not been an ordained minister of YEHOVAH God at that time. However, there is nothing said, in Acts 2, about the apostles laying on hands on the people they supervised for baptism on that first Pentecost, when 3,000 were converted. Evidently, only baptism was necessary at that time, since the apostles had monitored the baptism (Acts 2:38). Later, when Philip witnessed the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, there was no need for laying on of hands — just baptism (Acts 8:38-39).

Similarly, when the Messiah himself was baptized in the presence of the prophet John, the holy spirit came upon him without the need of "laying on of hands." In the example set for us by the Messiah himself, such a thing was not done. Therefore, laying on of hands is NOT necessary in all cases when baptisms are performed. Laying on of hands only becomes necessary when the baptisms are done in an incomplete way or witnessed by a person who lacks authority in YEHOVAH God's sight to give YEHOVAH's holy spirit to another repentant person.

In Acts 19 we find a good example. When Paul arrived at Ephesus, he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered him, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." Then Paul replied, "Then what baptism did you receive?" They answered, "John's baptism" (Acts 19:1-3.) Paul explained to them about Yeshua, and "they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

There were about twelve men in all" (verses 5-7).

Notice that these men had not been baptized into the Messiah. When they were, and Paul laid hands on them, YEHOVAH gave them His spirit so much so that they spoke in tongues, or foreign languages, as the apostles had on Pentecost, and Cornelius' household had at Caesarea.

Is laying on of hands necessary, then, to receive the holy spirit? In most places where baptism is mentioned, in the gospels and the book of Acts, laying on of hands is not even mentioned. Yeshua did not command his disciples to baptize AND LAY HANDS on all repentant people (Matt. 28:19-20), He just said to baptize them. That is all.

In most cases, therefore, when baptism is supervised by a true minister of YEHOVAH God, one whom YEHOVAH is using, the laying on of hands is not always necessary. In such cases, the act of baptism itself is sufficient. The only time this would not be the case would be in special circumstances where a non-minister did the baptizing, or where a new area was being opened up to the gospel, and those with greater spiritual authority were needed to validate the

preaching which had been done. In the case of the men at Ephesus, they had not been baptized into the Messiah at all — they only knew John’s baptism. Therefore, they had to baptize themselves again, in the name of the Messiah, and to have Paul’s hands placed on them, to receive the holy spirit. YEHOVAH God thereby testified that Paul was indeed His servant.

The strongest proof that the “laying on of hands” is not necessary for a new convert in the Messiah when the baptism is supervised by an authorized person, or when the recipient is truly qualified, is, of course, the example of the Messiah himself. The only reason Yeshua was baptized under John was to “fulfill all righteousness” — that is, to set us an example, showing that we, too, must be baptized! But in the Biblical account of the baptism of Yeshua, we find that after he came up out of the water, the Spirit of YEHOVAH God descended upon him like a dove. **NO LAYING ON OF HANDS WAS NECESSARY OR REQUIRED!** Yet the entire purpose for Yeshua being baptized was to “set us an example,” showing us precisely what we needed to do!

How clear, then, that when baptism is properly supervised, by a true servant of YEHOVAH God, with the authority to oversee baptisms and preach, the laying on of hands is not required or necessary.

Baptism 2,000 Years Ago

When Peter preached that first sermon on Pentecost, in 31 A.D., and 3,000 observant Judean believers in the Torah repented of their sins, and accepted Messiah Yeshua as their Savior, it is interesting to note that this event was at the “Feast of Weeks”— called “Shavuot,” which occurred fifty days after Passover. This was one of the three pilgrimage festivals, and that is why Judeans from around the Roman Empire were found in Jerusalem at this time. Josephus states that hundreds of thousands came to the festivals at these times.

When the spirit of YEHOVAH descended on those who were gathered “in one place,” the Judean pilgrims from throughout the Diaspora heard those local Judeans glorifying YEHOVAH God in various languages (Acts 2). Peter’s call to repent and to be baptized would have been familiar to his Judean audience. When he explained this should be “in the name of Jesus Christ,” they understood their repentance and purification would be in the context of the ministry and life of Yeshua, as Messiah.

Since 3,000 Judeans heard the message, and repented, and believed, and were baptized that day. Where is it likely that such a crowd would have been gathered, to hear Peter? Where in Jerusalem would there have been sufficient water to baptize 3,000 individuals?

It is very likely that this message or discourse was delivered in the court of the Temple, to the East or South. The baptisms would most likely have been performed in the numerous ritual baths, or mikvahs, located near the entrance to the Temple Mount. These ritual immersion baths served the needs of the thousands of Judean pilgrims who streamed into Jerusalem at

the three major annual festivals — Passover, Pentecost (Shavuot), and the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall.

It is surely not beyond the realm of possibility that these ritual immersion baths served the needs of the Messianic Community of the Early Ecclesia, especially on those days when thousands of Judean converts accepted Yeshua as their Messiah. Three thousand were converted and baptized on Pentecost. A few days later, another 5,000 were added: “Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand” (Acts 4:4).

Thirty years later, in about 60 A.D., when Paul returned to Jerusalem on a visit, James and the other apostles at the headquarters church told him, “Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law” (Acts 21:20). The word translated “thousands” here is *urias* from which we get the English word “myriads,” and means literally “ten thousands.” It means “an innumerable multitude,” “an unlimited number.” The same word is used in Jude 14 where we read, “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints” (Jude 14). These could have numbered between 50,000 and 100,000 or more before the Judean-Roman War of 70 A.D., a short ten years later. The ritual baths near the Temple Mount would have been a very logical place where many were baptized. Many others may also have been baptized in different pools around Jerusalem, such as the pool of Siloam, and many others in the Jordan River.

Have YOU Been Baptized?

Baptism symbolizes a person’s “death and burial” of their human flesh and desires, the “old man,” and their rising up out of that watery grave having obtained “new life” and becoming a “new man” in Messiah Yeshua. As Paul wrote, “That ye put off on concerning the former conduct the OLD MAN, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and that ye put on the NEW MAN, which after God is CREATED in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:22-24).

Baptism, then, is a vital and integral part of the Christian life. It is the beginning of a NEW LIFE — a life destined to live for all eternity. When we are baptized, having repented of our sins and accepted Messiah Yeshua as our mediator, YEHOVAH God promises to give us His own holy spirit (Acts 5:38) — a part of His very own Being, and Life, within us. From this point on the Messiah and his character is being “FORMED” IN US (Galatians 4:19). And if we grow, and endure, and remain faithful to the end of our lives, then we will inherit ETERNAL LIFE in the Family and Kingdom of YEHOVAH GOD!

Have you been “baptized”? Remember Peter’s words:

“REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT” (Acts 2:38).

“REPENT YE THEREFORE, AND BE CONVERTED, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: REPENT YE, and believe the gospel”
(Mark 1:15).

Have you “repented”? Do you “believe”? Have you accepted the Messiah — Yeshua — as your personal savior?

What hinders you from being baptized?

Hope of Israel Ministries — Preparing the Way for the Return of YEHOVAH God and His Messiah!

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To learn more about where the example of Baptism comes from we go once again to Jewish sources.

<http://www.essene.com/B%27nai-Amen/MysticalImmersion.htm> Mystical Mikveh Immersion

The Jewish Background of Christian Baptism by Ron Moseley, Ph. D.

Jewish Mikveh

“Baptism as a rite of immersion was not begun by Christians but was taken by them from Jewish and pagan forms....” – Dr. Merrill Tenney, the editor of the Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible

The term mikveh in Hebrew literally means any gathering of waters, but is specifically used in Jewish law for the waters or bath for the ritual immersion. Ancient sages teach that the word mikveh has the same letters as Ko(v)Meh, the Hebrew word for “rising” or “standing tall,” therefore we see the idea of being baptized “straightway.”

The building of the mikveh was so important in ancient times it was said to take precedence over the construction of a synagogue. On the third day of creation we see the source of the word mikveh for the first time in Genesis 1:10 when the Lord says, “...to the gathering (mikveh) of waters, He called seas.”

Because of this reference in Genesis the ocean is still a legitimate mikveh to orthodox Jews. Tovelei Shharit (Dawn Bathers)

The Essenes were anciently known as regular practitioners of daily immersion. In the Talmud these daily Mikveh practitioners are called tovelei shharit or “dawn bathers.” Not only Nasarenes, but several other Jewish groups observed ritual immersion every day to assure readiness for the coming of the Messiah. Epiphanius mentioned one of these groups called Hemerobaptists which means “daily bathers” in Greek. The Clementine Homilies, or

Recognitions of Clement, tell us that Peter always washed, often in the sea, before dawn which was no doubt a custom of all Nasarenes of his time. This practice received great attention by early historical writers on the Essenes. Qumran is certainly filled with ritual bathing pools and one quite large community Miqvah has been uncovered outside of the Essene Synagogue / Temple site in the Essene quarter of Jerusalem.

Ancient dawn bathing Nasarenes used at least three forms of Baptism, or mikveh purifications. We know this because the surviving remnants of these Nasarenes, the Nasorai sect (Mandaeans), still preserve these forms of this ancient Nasarene purification rite once practiced and promoted by Yeshua (Jesus). They are the daily Rishama Mikveh immersion, performed before dawn. The Tamasha immersion, and the Masbuta immersion. The surviving Mandaean versions of these are:

- **RISHAMA BAPTISM:** The first of the miqvah purifications performed is the rishama (signing), the priest's presence is not required, such that each man or woman is his or her own priest or priestess. This should be performed daily, and with covered head, just before sunrise after the evacuation of the bowels and before all religious ceremonies.
- **TAMASHA BAPTISM:** The second, the tamasha, is a simple triple immersion in the river, again this is performed without the aid of the priest or priestess. In present Mandaean tradition, it must be performed by women after menstruation and after childbirth. Both man and woman must perform this ablution immediately after sexual intercourse, it must be performed after touching a dead body, after nocturnal pollution or any serious defilement or contact with a defiled person, as impurity is contagious – a person touching an unclean person, himself becomes unclean. These practices are related to the ritual purity laws of the Jews and were no doubt taught and practiced to some degree, and after their own fashion, by early Nasarenes (See Clementine Homilies). In the Qumran Temple Scroll, the first of the regulations concerning people who were excluded from the holy temple precincts concerned a man who had a nocturnal emission. He was not permitted to re-enter “until three days have passed. He shall wash his garments and bathe on the first day, and on the third day he shall wash his garments and bathe, and after sunset he shall enter the sanctuary.”
- **MASBUTA BAPTISM:** The third ablution, or ‘full baptism’, encompasses all aspects of baptism and must be performed by a priest or priestess. This ablution is known as masbuta (maswetta) includes the sacraments of oil, bread (known as pihtha) and water (from the river only, known as mambuha), the kushta (the hand grasp and kiss) and the final blessing by laying the right hand of the priest or / and priestess on the head of the baptised person. The masbuta should take place on the first day of the week, in association with major initiations and after major or shameful defilement's. Major sins such as theft, murder, and adultery require more than one baptism.

The modern B'nai-Amen version of these three immersions are:

- **RISHAMA MIKVAH:** This is a daily pre-dawn self-immersion.
- **TAMASHA MIKVAH:** This is the weekly immersion held at the outset of the lunar Sabbath. It is a three-fold self-immersion during the Sangha refuge.

- MASBUTA MIKVAH: This is the special Shekinah Day baptism ceremony held annually and semi-annually. It is performed jointly by one's Godmother and Godfather (i.e. Spiritual Guardians).

Non-Essene Mikveh Traditions

The rabbinical tradition attributes, in its Mishnah, to Ezra a decree that each male should immerse himself before praying or studying. Immersion was so important among the Pharisees that it occurred before the high Priest conducted the service on the Day of Atonement, before the regular priests participated in the Temple service, before each person entered the Temple complex, before a scribe wrote the name of God, as well as several other occasions.

Essene & Pharisee Temple Mikvaot

The New Testament tells us that many of the early church's daily activities were centered around the Essene Temple. Historically, we know that there were also many ritual immersion baths (mikvaot) on the Bloody Temple Mount including one in the Chamber of Lepers situated in the northwest corner of the Court of Women (Mid. 2:5). Josephus tells us that even during the years of war (66-73 A.D.) the laws of ritual immersion were strictly adhered to (Jos. Wars, 4:205). Herod's Temple itself contained immersion baths in various places for the priests to use, even in the vaults beneath the court (Commentary to Tam. 26b; Tam. 1:1). The High Priest had special immersion pools in the Temple, two of which are mentioned in the Mishnah. We are told one of these was in the Water Gate in the south of the court and another was on the roof of the Parva Chamber (Mid. 1:4; Mid. 5:3). There was an additional place for immersion on the Mount of Olives which was connected with the burning of the red heifer (Par. 3:7). A special ramp led to the mikveh on the Mount of Olives from the Temple Mount, which was built as an arched way over another arched way to avoid uncleanness from the graves in the valley below. Recent archaeological excavations have found 48 different mikvaot near the Monumental Staircase leading into the Temple Complex.

Rabbinical Mikveh Use

According to non-Essene Jewish law there are three basic areas where immersion in the mikveh is required.

- Immersion is required for both men and women when converting to Judaism. There were three prerequisites for a proselyte coming into Judaism: Circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice (Maimonides, Hilkh. Iss. Biah xiii. 5). Essene Law also included conversion immersion, but not circumcision or animal sacrifice.
- Immersion is required after a woman has her monthly period (Lev. 15:28). Essene Law also included immersion for some forms of sexual pollution, but not all sexuality was considered defiling.
- Immersion is required for pots and eating utensils manufactured by a non-Jew (Encyclopedia of Jewish Religion p-263). Essene Law also included utensil immersion.

- It is customary to be immersed in the mikveh before Yom Kippur as a sign of purity and repentance and before the Sabbath in order to sensitize oneself to the holiness of the day.

There are six descending orders of Mikveh spoken of in the non-Essene Mishnah (Oral Law), the highest being that of a spring or flowing river, such as the Jordon. Nasurai (Mandean) texts tell us that this was considered the highest form of Mikveh among Nasarenes as well.

The six non-Essene restrictions on the water used in the mikveh come from the corrupt Leviticus 11:36 text. They are:

- The mikveh cannot contain other liquid besides water.
- The water has to be either built into the ground or be an integral part of a building attached to the ground.
- The mikveh cannot be flowing except for a natural spring, river or ocean.
- The water cannot be manually drawn.
- The water cannot be channeled to the mikveh by anything unclean.
- The mikveh must contain at least 40 sa'ah or approximately 200 gallons of water. (Rabbi Yitzchok ben Sheshes said the amount of 40 sa'ah was derived from the idea that the largest normal human body has a volume of 20 sa'ah, therefore the amount of water needed to "nullify" this body is double this amount or 40 sa'ah.)

Purpose

To the ancient Jews, both Essene and non-Essene, the mikveh was a process of spiritual purification and cleansing, especially in relation to the various types of Turmah or ritual defilement when the Temple was in use. We learn from the Clementine Homilies that Peter practiced daily pre-dawn Mikveh immersion. We may infer from this that all Nasarenes, including Yeshua and Maria, also practiced daily purifications. The orthodox (Rabbinic Judaism) classifies Mikveh laws under the Chukim group:

Mishpatim Laws: The moral or ethical laws that are necessary for man to live in harmony are known as Mishpatim and are literally translated judgments.

Edos Laws: The rituals and festivals which reawaken us to important religious truths such as Sabbath, holidays, the Tefillin and the Mezuzah that remind us of God's presence are known as Edos and are literally translated witnesses.

Chukim Laws: The third group often has no explicit reason given for their existence except for Israel's identification as God's chosen people to the other nations (Deuteronomy 4:6). This group of laws are known as Chukim and are literally translated as decrees. Among the decrees of this group are the dietary laws as well as ritual immersion.

Squatting Immersion

In ancient times immersion was to be performed in the presence of witnesses (Yebam. 47b). The person being baptized made special preparations by cutting his nails, undressed completely and made a fresh profession of his faith before the designated "fathers of the baptism" (Kethub. 11a; Erub 15a). This is possibly where churches, sometime later, got the

term Godfathers. The individual stood straight up with the feet spread and the hands held out in front. The candidate would totally immerse themselves by squatting in the water with a witness or baptizer doing the officiating. Note the New Testament points out the fact that Jesus came up straightway out of the water (Matthew 3:16).

The concept of immersion in rabbinic literature is referred to as a new birth (Yeb. 22a; 48b; 97b; Mass. Ger. c.ii). Note six other important aspects of ancient rabbinic Jewish immersion:

1. Immersion was accompanied by exhortations and benedictions (Maimonides Hilkh. Milah iii.4; Hilkh. Iss, Biah Xiv .6). A convert would reaffirm his acceptance of the Torah by declaring, "I will do and I will hear" which was a phrase from the oath that was originally taken by the priests not to forsake the Torah (Deuteronomy 29:9- 14). Mandeans had a similar saying they were known to utter at such times. This ritual demonstrates the willingness of the convert to forsake his Gentile background and assume his Jewish identity by taking on the status of one who keeps the commandments.

According to a number of Jewish sages, mayim, which is the Hebrew word for water, shares the same root as the word "mah", meaning "what." This teaching points out that when a person immerses in water, he is nullifying the fleshly ego and is asking, "what am I?" in the same manner that Moses and Aaron did in Exodus 16:7 when they said to the Lord, "we are what?"

2. The Jewish baptism candidates were often immersed three times. The idea of total immersion comes from the Scripture in Leviticus 15:16 when it says, "he shall wash all his flesh in the water." One reason it was customary to immerse three times was because the word mikveh occurs three times in the Torah. We know this to have been an early Nasarenes practice under Yeshua.

3. According to Jewish law the immersion had to have a required witness. Dr. William LaSor in the Biblical Archaeology Review says apparently the Biblical phrase "in the name of" was an indication of the required witness. In several New Testament references such as I Corinthians 1:13, 15; Matthew 21:25; Acts 1:22; and Acts 19:3 we see early baptism mentioned in conjunction with the name of individuals such as John and Paul. Further information on this can be found in Jewish literature concerning proselyte baptism where it indicates his baptism required attestation by witnesses in whose name he was immersed.

4. The immersion candidate was not initially touched by the baptizer in Yeshua's (Jesus') day. Because Leviticus 15:16 says "He shall wash all his flesh in the water," Rabbinical Judaism stresses that the entire body must come in contact with the water of the mikveh. To insure the immersion was valid, no clothing or individuals could touch the candidate. Any such intervention that prevented the water from reaching a part of the body was known as Chatzitzah and rendered the immersion invalid. Although the mikveh was more spiritual than physical, often the bath had two sets of steps, one entering and another leaving so as not to defile what had been purified. We know from Mandaean tradition, and also Cyril of Jerusalem, that early Nasarene baptisms were performed without restricted clothing. Once relatively pure

from preliminary self-immersions, catecumens could be touched by the officiating Priest and Priestess for full Baptism.

5. The baptismal water (Mikveh) in rabbinic literature was referred to as the womb of the world, and as a convert came out of the water it was considered a new birth separating him from the pagan world. As the convert came out of these waters his status was changed and he was referred to as “a little child just born” or “a child of one day” (Yeb. 22a; 48b; 97b). We see the New Testament using similar Jewish terms as “born anew,” “new creation,” and “born from above”, although among Nasarenes one was seen as born anew and separated from the non Essene world, and among B’nai-Amen the immersion meant separation from all the world, including the unconsecrated Nasarenes.

6. Jewish law requires at least three witnesses made up of qualified leaders to be present for certain immersions (Yebam 47b). Ordinarily a member of the Sanhedrin performed the act of observing the proselytes immersion, but in case of necessity others could do it. Secret baptism, or where only the mother brought a child, was not acknowledged. Essene law had similar injunctions.

The Jerusalem Talmud states, “nothing can stand before repentance” (Yebamos 47b).

According to Dr. David Flusser, the Dead Sea Scrolls as well as the New Testament teach that water can purify the body only if the soul has first been purified through repentance and righteousness.

The Jews believe that uncleanness is not physical, but rather a spiritual condition as related in Leviticus 11:44 where it states by wrong actions one can make the “soul unclean.” Therefore, the purification through ritual immersion, as commanded in Essene tradition, and rabbinical scripture, is basically involved with the soul, rather than the body. In rabbinical tradition, water and blood symbolism intertwine. In true Essene tradition, purification comes thru the Earthly Mother and her consecrated elements of earth, water, air and fire. There are two types of each of these four elements, making eight consecrated substances used for purification among the B’nai-Amen. They are Grain and Salt (Earth); Water and Oil (Water); Ash and Spirit (Air), and Incense and Wine (Fire).

Associated with these 8 substances are eight everyday cleaning agents: Corn Starch and Borax (Earth); Water and Soap (Water); non-phosphate Detergent/Washing Soda and Hydrogen Peroxide (Air), and Aromatics and Vinegar (Fire).

The Nazarenes of Mount Carmel

I have shared this story before.

I was baptised as an infant in the catholic faith by having some water sprinkled on my head. This was not a real baptism. I had no say and no understanding.

In 1983 I was baptised in the World Wide Church of God in a horse trough by being totally immersed. Thus I began my journey to understanding Torah.

At Sukkot in 2006 I was re-baptised in the Gihon Spring which flows from beneath the very throne of Yehovah when the temple stood; The Living waters spoken of many times in scriptures. At this time the man who laid hands on me asked that my gifts be enhanced for Yehovah's work. Since then I have not been able to stop speaking out about the Torah and our Creator and His Sabbatical years. What gifts or talents lie dormant inside of you? When will you be baptised and reborn to this new way of life?

Each time I go back to Israel I mikveh again in those special waters that flowed from beneath His very throne.