

WATER IMMERSION (BAPTISM)

Why Water Immersion?

Let us consider Mashiach Yahusha's own immersion as described in Matthew 3:13-14;

Then Yahusha came from Galilee to Yochanan (John) at the Jordan to be immersed by him. But Yochanan tried to stop Him, saying "You are coming to me when I should be immersed by You." Yahusha answered, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness."

In response to Yochanan's challenge to Him Mashiach Yahusha says *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness."*

Yochanan's immersion was one of preparation and repentance. But Mashiach Yahusha did not need to undergo such an immersion. Yochanan knew this and hence his challenge to Mashiach Yahusha. The common understanding is that Mashiach Yahusha was merely setting the example for all to follow. But was Mashiach Yahusha's immersion nothing more than an example? By His own words it would appear not, because He included Himself as being necessary to fulfil all righteousness. Had He wanted to exclude Himself, He would not have said 'us' but rather 'they' or 'believers' or 'mankind.' It would appear that Mashiach Yahusha believed that He needed to 'complete all righteousness.'

So Yochanan's immersion was for preparation and repentance whereas Yahusha's immersion was to complete all righteousness. For Yahusha to consider that He also must fulfil all righteousness this requirement must have come from the Father. Mashiach Yahusha could only be alluding to achieving righteousness in the eyes of YHWH. But what exactly does this mean?

Shaul (Paul) provides some clarity in Rom.10:1-3;

"Brothers, my heart's deepest desire and my prayer to YHWH for Israel is for their salvation, for I can testify to their zeal for YHWH. But it is not based on correct understanding, for since they are unaware of YHWH's way of making people righteous and instead seek to set up their own, they have not submitted themselves to YHWH's way of making people righteous."

When Shaul says Israel had a zest for YHWH, he is referring to their devotion to Torah, what Christians call Law. However, whilst Torah observance is an essential ingredient (Rom.3:21), Shaul continues saying that such devotion itself is not enough to achieve righteousness in YHWH's sight. So what else does YHWH require of us for Him to consider us righteous? We can find clarity in the same book in Rom.3:24;

"By YHWH's grace, without earning it, all are granted the status of being considered righteous before Him through the act redeeming us from our enslavement to sin that was accomplished by the Mashiach Yahusha."

In the earlier verses Shaul is confirming that salvation can only be the result of receiving YHWH's righteousness and in the above verse that this righteousness requires, amongst other things, **belief in YHWH's plan for atonement – to be achieved only through the death and ascension of His Son.** The apostle expresses this in terms of a circumcision,

In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Messiah, having been buried with Him in immersion, in which you also were raised with Him through the belief in the working of Elohim, who raised Him from the dead. (Col.2:11-12).

Mashiach Yahusha confirms this premise with His final instruction to His disciples;

Go into all the world and preach the good news to every creature. He who believes and is immersed will be saved.....” (Mark 15:15-16)

In what are we to believe? That Mashiach is our only means of atonement. Could it be that Mashiach Yahusha’s immersion was His acceptance also of His Father’s plan? Even though He knew He was to be the sacrifice Mashiach Yahusha, by His immersion, showed His obedience and subservience to the Father’s will and plan for salvation. Maybe this is why the Father responded;

“This is my Son with whom I am well pleased.” (Matt.3:17).

Mashiach Yahusha’s immersion signalled what is to be the scripturally accepted physical act of acceptance of YHWH’s plan for atonement, being the death and resurrection of His Son; Mashiach Yahusha. By His immersion Mashiach Yahusha was demonstrating His obedience to His Father’s plan.

The Principle behind Scriptural Immersion

We must believe in the atonement provided by Mashiach Yahusha by which He is the saviour for all humanity. Belief and immersion are the first two steps toward salvation. Let us consider the scriptural principle behind immersion and consider another passage from the book of Romans;

“Therefore we were buried with Him through immersion into death.....” (Rom.6:4).

Scriptural immersion is a burial, it is a real burial; it is not a fake death. This actual death is symbolised with the body being completely immersed into an alien environment; water, in which it cannot survive. With respect to immersion the scriptural meaning of the term burial is explained by Paul in Ephesians;

“That you put off, with regard to your former behaviour; the old man, being corrupted according to deceit.” (Eph. 4:22).

Entering into the water we take with us a body that is controlled by a rebellious, sinful nature and we drown it, we bury it. For this reason the scriptures refer to our earlier body (before immersion) as the old man. Now let us consider the latter part of Romans 6:4;

“That as Mashiach Yahusha was raised from the dead by the esteem of the Father, so also should we walk in newness of life.”

If the body which entered the water is dead and buried that body remains in the water therefore what comes out of the water must to be a new body a new life. It was this principle of a new life that Mashiach Yahusha was alluding to in John 3:5 when He said;

“Most assuredly, I say to you unless one is born of water and of the spirit he will not enter the Kingdom of YHWH.”

The Physical Effect of Immersion

The act of immersion is the physical expression of a desire to change from a sinful (rebellious) lifestyle and henceforth to live in obedience to YHWH’s instruction; His Torah. YHWH responds to immersion by circumcising the immersed

person's heart through His Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit). The person enters the water with a stony heart and emerges with a heart of flesh;

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit inside you; I will take the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My spirit inside you and cause you to live by My laws, respect My rulings and obey them." (Ezek.36:26-27).

The Father's reaction to immersion is to despatch his Ruach HaKodesh to indwell within the person immersed. The proof of this is in the record of Mashiach's own immersion,

And having been immersed, Yahusha went up immediately from the water, and see, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of Elohim descending like a dove and coming upon Him. (Matt.3:16).

When Mashiach Yahusha spoke of being born of water He was alluding to death by immersion, that is, the death of a rebellious heart and the birth of an obedient heart. With immersion comes circumcision and with circumcision starts a new spirit filled life: it is all about lifestyle, all about living in obedience with YHWH's Torah.

A further statement of relevance from Mashiach is the following,

He who has believed and has been immersed shall be saved, but he who has not believed shall be condemned. (Mark 16:16).

Belief and immersion cannot be separated they are homogeneous; the one is deficient without the other as can be seen by the necessary declarations in the following section.

Procedural Requirement for the Efficacy of an Immersion.

The burial and new birth described above cannot happen by itself, by merely being immersed. If this was the case every time we dived in to a swimming pool it would represent an immersion.

A) The immersion has to be done with a spiritual intent.

In Acts 2:38, Peter declares that repentance must precede immersion and therefore repentance has to be a prerequisite of immersion. Although Mashiach Yahusha introduced a new concept to immersion, the principle of repentance (Yochanan's immersion) remains an essential requirement for immersion. The person desirous of immersion must acknowledge their sinful nature, repent of it, and confess a soul desire to bury it.

We must also include the words of Mashiach Yahusha, *"he who believes and is immersed will be saved."* Mashiach Yahusha clearly states belief is also a prerequisite to immersion. Peter reiterates these words of Mashiach Yahusha in 1 Pet.3:21, explaining that immersion is the answer to a good conscience which, according to his words, is achieved through faith (belief) in the atoning death and resurrection of Mashiach Yahusha.

To summarise, immersion requires the prerequisites; repentance and belief in atonement through Mashiach Yahusha, leading to a good conscience. These prerequisites dictate that only people of a mature mind qualify for immersion thereby excluding babies and infants.

B) The proper acclamations must be spoken

i) By the person being immersed (this is the first declaration).

The person desirous of immersion must be able to proclaim a clean conscience and the following declaration is an example of what should precede their immersion;

I acknowledge that there is only one Elohim and His name is Yahuwah and that He has a Son Yahusha my Messiah, all other gods are false.

"I acknowledge and repent of my transgressions of my Father's Torah and acknowledge the propitiation of my transgressions only through the atoning blood of Mashiach Yahusha, my Master and Saviour."

ii) By the person immersing

Although little direct advice is given in the scriptures with respect to what words, if any, should be spoken over the person being immersed, there are passages within the scriptures that provide help;

'Don't you know that those of us who have been immersed into the Mashiach Yahusha have been immersed into His death.' (Rom6:3)

'And Peter said to them "Repent and let each one of you be immersed in the Name of Mashiach Yahusha for forgiveness of sins. And you shall receive the gift of the Ruach HaKodesh (HS)."' (Acts 2:38).

'And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Master Yahusha, giving thanks to Elohim the Father through Him. (Col.3:17).

Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that in the Name of Mashiach Yahusha of Nazareth, whom you impaled, whom Elohim raised from the dead, by Him this one stands before you, healthy. This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone. And there is no deliverance in anyone else for there is no other Name under the heaven given among men by which we need to be saved.' (Acts 4:10-12)

It would appear that for an immersion to conform to scripture it must be properly declared in whose authority the old sinful life is being buried and in whose authority a new life is able to come up out of the water. That authority is the Mashiach Yahusha.

The following is an example of what may be spoken over the person to be immersed;

Before immersion:

"Having repented of your sinful past and declared your belief in Mashiach Yahusha, by the POWER OF HIS ATONEMENT may your sinful life remain in this water and may you receive a newness of life. May your Father YHWH acknowledge your newness of life, circumcising your heart with His Ruach HaKodesh and may your Father YHWH accept you into the body of His Son; Yahusha HaMashiach."

This declaration acknowledges what is said by Mashiach Yahusha in John 6:44 & 65 that nobody can come to Him unless it is the will of the Father. But more than this the above satisfies a fundamental stated in Exod.3:15;

'Elohim said further to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh the Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, the Elohim of Jacob has sent me to you. This is my name forever, this is how I am to be remembered, generation after generation."

This is an express provision of the Father. In any reference to our Father be it immersion or otherwise, compliance with this passage is paramount. The principle of using the actual name is extended to our Mashiach Yahusha by the writer of Hebrews;

'.....Through Him (Mashiach Yahusha). therefore, let us offer Elohim a sacrifice of praise continually. For this is the natural product of lips that acknowledge His name (Yahusha).' (Heb.13:15)

After immersion:

"May YHWH's Ruach HaKodesh guide you in the ways of YHWH's Torah providing you with knowledge and understanding."

It may be desirable for the immersion to be sealed with the Aharonic blessing,

*May YHWH bless you and keep you,
May YHWH make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you
May YHWH lift His face towards you and give you peace.*

Scriptural Immersion -Vis- Counterfeit Immersion

Very few, if any, immersions satisfy the above. Satan does not want anybody saved and so he has created deception at every level of YHVH's plan for mankind. It was revealed in the book 'A Bullet From Heaven' how Satan has sown a counterfeit doctrine to match every doctrine of YHVH that is; a counterfeit faith; a counterfeit day of worship, a counterfeit death and resurrection, a counterfeit Mashiach, counterfeit prophets, and teachers. It should therefore, be no surprise that he has also provided a counterfeit immersion.

Although the above are examples of what may be said, any declarations of a lesser content will not satisfy what is required for a scriptural immersion and would result in nothing more than the empty act of wetting a person and a counterfeit immersion. Without the proper acclamations the immersion will not produce a spiritual new birth which is its sole objective,

Yahusha answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he is unable to enter into the reign of Elohim. (John.3:5)

Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You have to be born again.' (John 3:7).

Only if the immersion is accompanied with the above acclamations or something similar is there any evidence the person understands the true spiritual significance of immersion and their want to achieve its spiritual objective: that of a new/different person.

Christian Baptism

The declaration spoken at a Christian baptism, usually being; “I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” has to be the most ridiculous of statements because what is said is not actually done. Father, son and holy spirit are not names they are titles. The resultant baptism fails miserably to satisfy any of the criteria necessary for a scriptural immersion most specifically ignores Exod. 3:15 and Heb.13:15 as given above, in effect is just an empty soaking.

However, this is not to say that a Christian baptism is a complete waste of time, YHWH works with contrite/repentant hearts. Any Christian who shows the Father a strong desire to really know Him: not just go to church for an hour a week but is willing to give Him their time, is willing to study and obey His Word (obey His Law) will receive His attention. For such a person church baptism would be a signal for YHWH to commence working within that person and eventually lead them towards an immersion that satisfies John 3.

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