



# Immersion / Baptism

B'NAI ELOHIM FELLOWSHIP

## THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

The English word 'baptize' comes from the Greek word *baptizo*. This word, in turn, comes from the Hebrew *taval*.

It's meaning in our context and use is to dip or to plunge into water, i.e., to surround or immerse something into water. Its cognate (family) meaning is the act of pressing down. This same word is used to describe a woman dyeing a linen garment. *Tevilah* is the act of dipping white linen into colorful dyes to change their color. The Greek word *baptizo* maintains this same definition, for it, too, means to dip, plunge or immerse.

The first occurrence of a word always lays the foundation for its literal and symbolic use. The first appearance of the word *taval* translated into *baptizo* is in Sh'mot/ Ex 12:22:

*"And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and **DIP** it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning."*

The first occurrence of this word is directly associated with the 'pressing down' of the hyssop into the bowl containing the blood of the Passover lamb. The first occurrence is found in the immersion into the blood of the lamb rather than the oft cited water. Blood outside of the body represents death. This is why our Redeemer shed His blood for us. The partakers of the Passover had their doors covered with blood the representation of death, so when YHVH came through He passed over the houses with the blood or death applied. In other words, YHVH could not smite what was already dead. This is the background to Paul's remarks in

Romans 6:1-8: *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are **dead** to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptized** into Messiah Y'shua were **baptized** into his **death**? Therefore, we are buried with him by **baptism into death**: that like as 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: 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. For he that is **dead** is freed from sin. Now if we be **dead with Messiah**, we believe that we shall also live with him:..."*

### CAN YOU SEE HOW MANY TIMES BAPTISM IS ASSOCIATED WITH DEATH?

The picture God is drawing from the beginning is that when the end comes and judgment falls, those who are already judged (dead in Messiah) will be passed over. You cannot kill that which is already dead. The death pictured here is the old man of sin. This is pictured by the blood on the doorposts.

You and I are immersed in His blood, which represents His death for us. This is our first occurrence of the Hebrew word for baptism in the Tanakh, but this is not the first occurrence of a baptism. The place in which a *tevilah* was to take place was called a *miq<sup>e</sup>veh*. This word comes from the root *qavah*, which means to gather together for a purpose.

### FROM GENESIS

Most Hebrew words that are associated with righteousness and holiness all share an etymological background of oneness, unity and gathering into one. Most Hebrew words that are associated with unrighteousness and evil all share an etymological background of scattering, breaking, mixing and dividing. The word for a baptismal is no exception. The first occurrence of a baptizing is actually in the very beginning.

In verses nine and ten of Genesis chapter 1, we have the earth baptized first. All the material from whence life will come from, is first immersed and then brought up out of the water.

Gen 1:9-10 *"And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the **GATHERING TOGETHER** of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.*

AFTER the Spirit of God moves on the face of the waters, we have the earth coming up out of the waters. The phrase 'gathering together' in verse ten is the word *ul<sup>e</sup>miq<sup>e</sup>veh*. This Hebrew word is the word *miq<sup>e</sup>veh*. This is the Hebrew word for baptismal, or the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek *baptizo*. It means a place of gathering. The Creator begins by immersing and cleansing the earth within which all plants, animals and people come from. The cleansing power of water still fascinates man to this day.

Every law and every commandment of God has a physical and a spiritual purpose and application. All things brought forth from the earth are cleansed and declared very good by the Master. We have our pattern of baptism displayed in the gathering together of the waters in B'reshiyth/Gen 1:10, AFTER the bringing forth of light. This will be the pattern for man as well.

All those who will dwell in the house of Israel are His family, made up of His people. Those who belong in His house are those who have been cleansed, are expressing His light and producing His fruit, because they have inherited His seed. The process that one goes through to enter His house is first expressed in the creation in the beginning. The creation is first cleansed by the Spirit of God (B'reshiyt 1:2), then it receives the light (B'reshiyt 1:3), followed by the immersion and rising from the waters (B'reshiyt 1:10). All this is followed by the creation's ability to be a witness (B'reshiyt 1:14-18)

Man is first immersed by God's Spirit from within. This, is the one baptism that Rav Sha'ul refers to in Ephesians 4. The etymological background of baptism is to gather. Not only to gather, but to gather into one. It is the Word of God that ultimately does the gathering. It is the Word of God that regenerates us. The Word of God will cleanse us, produce light in us, gather us together and cause fruit to produce from us so that

we may be a witness unto all the creation. All who are part of this **onehouse**, **onebody** and **oneseed**, are redeemed by first being washed in the water of His Word. The fruit of this immersion is that we bring forth light, then we immerse ourselves into the waters of baptism. God has designed the natural and spiritual laws and ordinances to play a symbiotic role in the kingdom. The spiritual cannot have completed purpose or expression without the natural and vice versa.

### TRADITIONALLY SPEAKING

Immersion, tevillah, is the common core component of every [traditional] Jewish conversion process. Submerging in a pool of water for the purpose not of using the water's physical cleansing properties but expressly to symbolize a change-of-soul is a statement at once deeply spiritual and immensely compelling. No other symbolic act can so totally embrace a person as being submerged in water, which must touch and cover every lesion, every strand of hair, every birthmark. No other religious act is so freighted with meaning as this one which touches every aspect of life and proclaims a total commitment to a new idea and a new way of life as it swallows up the old and gives birth to the new.

The water of the mikveh is designed to ritually cleanse a person from deeds of the past. The convert is considered by Jewish law to be like a newborn child. By spiritually cleansing the convert, the mikveh water prepares him or her to confront Elohim, life, and people with a fresh spirit and new eyes--it washes away the past, leaving only the future. If we take this graphic metaphor a step further, we can sense that the mikveh is a spiritual womb. The human fetus is surrounded by water. It does not yet live. The water breaks in a split second and the child emerges into a new world. "As soon as the convert immerses and emerges, he is in the house and part of the family in every respect".

## LAW OF ADOPTION

This is the law of adoption in the ANE. In the Ancient Near East, the laws of adoption included the Father receiving the son out of the amniotic fluid or water of the womb and state the words, "You are my son". This is also the idea of baptism when the son comes out of the water, they state "you are my Father". This child is now considered as one born of the family from birth. ANET LEGAL TERMS,

1. **FATHER** –Is what the vassals call their suzerain (King)
2. **SON** – Is what the King calls his vassals
3. **ADOPTION** –when a vassal king submits to the suzerain then the vassal kings people become adopted by the Suzerain

Terms of Adoption used by Paul are, **Sons of Elohim, Heirs, Adoption, Co-Heirs**

**The Adopter gives a name to the Child. Par. 185 of the Hammurabi Code deals with the case of the adoption of a free-born child. The first part of the law reads "If a man has taken a young boy in adoption (to be called) by his name".**

The meaning of ina musu here is that the adopter (A) has bestowed his own name upon the adopted son (B) and that henceforth the latter is to be known as 'B the son of A.

*2 Ch 7:14 if my people, **who are called by my name**, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

*Hoshea 1:10, Yet the number of the children of Israel will be as the sand of the sea, which can't be measured nor numbered; and it will come to pass that, in the place where it was said to them, **'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living Elohim.'**<sup>11</sup> The children of Judah and the children of Israel will be*

*gathered together, and they will appoint themselves one head, and will go up from the land; for great will be the day of Jezreel.*

*Psalms 2:6 "Yet I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion." 7 I will tell of the decree. Yahweh said to me, **"You are my son. Today I have become your father."***

Matthew 3:16, Yeshua, when he was baptized, went up directly from the water: and behold, the heavens were opened to him. He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming on him. 17 Behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

***Galatians 3:26 For you are all children of Elohim, through faith in Messiah Yeshua. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Messiah have put on Messiah. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua. 29 If you are Messiah's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise.***

*Galatians 4:3 So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental principles of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time came, Elohim sent out his Son, born to a woman, born under the law, 5 that he might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the **adoption** of children. 6 And because you are children, Elohim sent out the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!" 7 So you are no longer a bondservant, **but a son**; and if a son, then an heir of Elohim through Messiah.*

The 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).

## REQUIRED WITNESS

The Jewish baptism candidates were often immersed three times. The idea of total immersion comes from the Scripture times was because the word mikveh occurs three times in the Torah.

According to Jewish law the immersion has 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.**

*Rev 1:5 "And from Yeshua the Messiah, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"*

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"

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 day of Shavuot, all the people present were Israelites & Jews

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

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

## TRUE REPENTANCE

*Ps 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

*Ps 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

*Ezequiel 36:25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.*

*Act 22:16 Now why are you waiting? Get up and be immersed, and wash away your sins, calling on His Name.'*

*2Co 7:1 Therefore, since we have these promises, loved ones, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of body and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

*1 Co 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Adoni Yeshua, and by the Spirit of our God.*

REPENT AND BE MIKVEH!

BECAUSE WE ARE THE BODY THAT IS UNCLEAN DUE TO OUR DISPERSION AND TOUCHING ALL KINDS OF DEAD THINGS. WE WERE THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN, IDOLATROUS, LEPERS, WOMAN IN NIDDAH, AND EATING THE UNCLEAN. THEREFORE, WE NEED TO BE IMMERSE IN YESHUA TO BE BORN AGAIN AND BE A NEW CREATURE.

