

Ritual Immersion Ceremony (Baptism)

Background of Ritual Immersion for the Early Believers

When Kefa talks to the people at the Temple in Jerusalem on Shavuot also know as Pentecost, he tells them they should be immersed in the name of Yeshua the Messiah. The act of immersion is sometimes called baptism. Baptism is often associated with non-biblical pagan practice such as infant sprinkling or the idea that being baptized somehow makes you different. Immersion is a commanded ritual that requires a decision. We will use the word immersion instead of baptism.

The Bible has its roots in Israelite or Jewish practice (and not Greek or Roman practice) so we should call this commanded ritual immersion. It is a symbolic ritual. When a person goes under the water, they are said to be dead to their old person of sin and sinful values. When they rise out of the water, they are said to be risen to a new life; to being a person who will now keep God's commandments. Romans 6:11 NKJV says, "Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord." When we go under the water we leave our worthless ungodly life behind us and are now alive to God in Yeshua Messiah.

Just as the Messiah rose from the dead; we arise to begin living new life. That is why infant baptism is just a hoax. An infant cannot make the decision to live a new life and leave sin behind. The Bible does say that the infant of believing parents sanctify their children until they are able to decide for themselves. 1 Corinthians 7:14 NKJV says, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy." This does not mean that the spouse is okay with God; that is a decision they must make. We must all stand before a just God and be judged for how we have lived. We can dedicate our baby, but the promise to sanctify our child is for a true believer who is keeping God's commandments.

The idea of being immersed in the name of Yeshua means they are accepting that Yeshua is indeed the promised Messiah and God. Acts 2:38-39 NKJV, "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.'"

We can see all the elements that we just talked about. To repent means to do *teshuvah* which is the Hebrew word for turning around. We turn towards God and He the turns toward us. This is a commanded ritual so as we do this, we need to very seriously recognize that God is turned toward us and looking at our hearts and knows what we are thinking. Psalms 139:4 NKJV says, "For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether."

It says baptized, but this is a Greek text; we must understand the Bible in its Jewish context; the Jews performed this ceremony by being immersed. Again, we accept Yeshua for who He is and the Bible says that the Messiah would die for our sins and is God. Isaiah 53:6 NKJV says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Then in Jeremiah 23:5-6 NKJV it says, "'Behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall

reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Notice how it says that, "I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness." This is referring to the righteous Messiah who would be born from the line of David. His name is, "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." So the Messiah is God; Yeshua Messiah is God. The word LORD in all caps is the exclusive name for God, Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey; it is pronounced Yě-hō-váh.

The name for God is Yě-hō-váh as seen in over 2,363 manuscripts to date. Only once as Yehoveh; **never as Yahweh**. The name Yahweh was just made up by a Gentile theologian. Someone recently asked me if God is going to condemn him for saying Yahweh. No, but shouldn't you use God's name correctly if you know it? In Numbers 6:27, it says we are to put God's name on his people so we should actually use His name.

Yeshua believed that God's name was important to use. Yeshua taught and used God's name, "I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." John 17:25-26 NKJV. So we will use His name in our ritual. Sadly, a lot of time, theology takes the Bible out of its contextual Jewish biblical roots; why not understand the Bible correctly and believe and do what is right?

It says that after we are water immersed in Acts 2:38-39, we are to receive the Holy Spirit. Sometimes this happens at immersion or sometimes it happens at a later date. Yeshua says we are to ask for the Holy Spirit. Yeshua tells His Talmidim in Acts 1:4-5 NKJV, "And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which, He said, 'you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'" Yeshua also said to them in Acts 1:8 NKJV, But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

We are commanded to perform the ritual of water immersion and are commanded to receive the Holy Spirit. Yeshua said the Holy Spirit is good in Luke 11:11-13 NKJV, "If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Some say God's commandments are not good; even so-called believers. It says God's commandments in the Old Testament portion give us *wisdom and understanding* (Deuteronomy 4:6), *they prolong life* (Deuteronomy 6:13), and they *are good* (Deuteronomy 10:13). Also, some people say the Holy Spirit is not good; Yeshua said just the opposite. The Bible actually says these naysayers have evil hearts! Hebrews 3:12 NKJV, "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief." They say they are believers, but they are unbelievers posing as believers.

Today we are here to do water immersion.

That is a commanded ritual. Kefa said we are to be immersed in the name of Yeshua. That means we are to accept His authority as Messiah. Yeshua is also God the Bible says. We will also immerse using the names of God. God was a father to the Jews and He is our father too. God is also Yeshua and the Holy Spirit is also God.

The Jews considered God their Father and they were part of the spiritual family of God. "Is He not your Father, who bought you?" Deuteronomy 32:6 NKJV. Through the Messiah, we are purchased by His sacrifice as prophesied by Isaiah some 600 years before Yeshua came. God is our Father because we believe in the Father, the Messiah Yeshua, and the Holy Spirit and in what Yeshua did for us. During the immersion ritual we will acknowledge who God is and therefore our desire to enter God's family of believers.

Yeshua is God and His name means salvation. In the Hebrew Matthew it says He will be called Yeshua for He will (*yoshia*), save His people from their sin. Do you hear the obvious Hebrew play on words? Yeshua – *yoshia*. So, the text says, 'Yeshua (salvation) will *yoshia* (will save us)' from our sins. Yeshua came to help us not to sin. The Messiah came to help us through the Holy Spirit. The Bible clearly tells us that those who live in sin will go to the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." We are literally saved from eternal damnation. So the people who make fun of us by saying, "what are we saved from," are in terrible danger. They need to know. I wouldn't want anyone to end up in the lake of fire and neither does God. God wants, "All men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth;" 1 Timothy 2:4 NKJV.

More about Yeshua; the ancient rabbis understood that God could take the form of a man and that the Messiah would be God and born from the line of David as we saw in Jeremiah 23:5-6. Also, God (Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey; Yě-hō-váh) ate with and spoke to Abraham. "So the LORD," (Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey; Yě-hō-váh) "went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham;" Genesis 18:33 NKJV.

We also see the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament portion. The rabbis believed the shekinah to be a form of God. We believe that is a form of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is mentioned in the second verse of the Bible. "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Genesis 1:2 NKJV. The Shema says, "יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְהוָה אֶחָד."¹ It basically says, 'God God God' is one. Look at the translation of Deuteronomy 6:4 NKJV, "Hear, O Israel: The **LORD** our **God**, the **LORD** is one!". Could it be any plainer? How can people miss this? But if you are told something long enough, you just replace what you see with a lie.

We are to be immersed in water; Kefa said in Acts 2:40-41 NKJV, "And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation. Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them." They understood what they were to do and now so do you. Being immersed in

¹ <https://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0506.htm> - Deuteronomy 6:4

the authority of Yeshua was a required ritual. Acts 8:12 NKJV says, "But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized." What did they believe in? They believed in the Messiah Yeshua and in who He is.

Basically, we are to make a proclamation as to who Yeshua is. Romans 10:9 is thought to be an ancient proclamation during water immersion; we are to announce that Yeshua is God and believe Yeshua rose from the dead as proof He is the Messiah. I will be asking you to affirm your faith in the Messiah Yeshua in a few moments.

Being immersed in water is symbolic of becoming a new person and it is something we all should do. It can be a good thing to recommit your life to God each and every day. This is a special time and ritual we are doing today though. Before Yeshua came, Yochanan the Immerser (John the Baptist) had been immersing people in water and telling them to turn back to God. He came to turn the people's hearts back to God like the prophetic words of Malachi 4:6 refer to.

There are many symbolic things the Jewish people did. They were visible acts which make or form a mental picture. Immersion is one of those symbolic rituals. The Jews know the proper way baptism is to be performed and it is by immersion. If the Gentile community would study its Jewish roots, they wouldn't be fighting over how a baptism is supposed to be done.

1 John 2:2 CJB says about Yeshua, "He is the kapparah for our sins - and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world." Kapparah means substitutional sacrifice. Yeshua's sacrifice only needed to be done one time for all of time for the sins of the world and for everyone who will accept Him. This included those in the Old Testament portion. Yeshua said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad;" John 8:56 NKJV.

We will now begin the immersion ceremony

The almighty eternal God **sees us** and acknowledges our presence this day to immerse _____ in water. We acknowledge that God is our Father Yĕhōvāh, our Messiah Yeshua, and the Holy Spirit. They will enter the water with the intention of living a new and spiritually clean life and live for God, follow His commandments, and live with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Do you accept Yeshua as the Messiah who died for our sins and rose again from the dead, and that He is now ascended into heaven until the end times?

Do you accept this immersion as a demonstration of your faith in God as our Father Yĕhōvāh, Yeshua Messiah our God, and the Holy Spirit God?

Do you intend to live for God and avoid sin, and encourage others to live for God and keep God's commandments?

I encourage you to pursue God with all your heart and keep God's commandments and seek the work of the Holy Spirit as the Bible says we should do.

I will now say the Aaronic Benediction and then proceed with the immersion ritual.
It says in Numbers 6:27 NKJV, "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.". So we will use the real name of God as it says in Exodus 3:15. God says that Yēhōvāh will be His name forever. How long is forever? It is forever.

Ye-va-re-khe-kha Yēhōvāh ve-yish-me-re-kha
May Yēhōvāh bless you and protect you.

Ya'er Yēhōvāh panav e-ley-kha vi-chun-ne-ka
May Yēhōvāh shine His face to you and be gracious to you.

Yi'sa Yēhōvāh panav e-ley-kha ve-ya-sem le-kha shalom
May Yēhōvāh turn His face to you and give to you peace.

Yēhōvāh bless you and protect you;
Yēhōvāh shine His face on you and be gracious to you;
Yēhōvāh turn His face upon you and give to you peace. (reference Numbers 6:24-26)

Immersion in water

*I now bless you in the name of our God Yēhōvāh and our Messiah Yeshua.

*And I immerse you in the name of our Father Yēhōvāh, Yeshua Messiah our God, and the Holy Spirit God.

*By the authority of and in the name Yeshua our Messiah, Amen.

We have now concluded the immersion ritual.