

Immersion (Baptism) in Water and the Holy Spirit

Kefa said, "Turn from sin, return to God, and each of you be immersed on the authority of Yeshua the Messiah into forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Ruach HaKodesh! For the promise is for you, for your children, and for those far away- as many as ADONAI our God may call!" Acts 2:38-39 CJB. The first thing that we see is that Kefa (Peter) tells them to turn from sin. Most of the people he was talking to were observant Jews who were there for Shavuot (Pentecost) and knew the Torah (God's instructions).

The first thing that we see is that Kefa (Peter) tells them to turn from sin. Most of the people he was talking to were observant Jews who were there for Shavuot (Pentecost) and knew the Torah (God's instructions) and knew what sin was.

Then they were to be immersed in Yeshua's authority. Basically, we are to make a proclamation as to who He is. Romans 10:9 is thought to be an ancient proclamation during water immersion (baptism): we are to announce that Yeshua is God and believe Yeshua rose from the dead. "If you acknowledge publicly with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord and trust in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be delivered;" Romans 10:9 CJB.

Being baptized or being immersed in water is symbolic of becoming a new person and it is something we all should do. Yochanan the Immerser (John the Baptist) had been immersing people in water and telling them to turn back to God before Yeshua came. He came to turn the people's hearts back to God like the prophetic words of Malachi refer to (Malachi 4:6). There are many symbolic things the Jewish people did. They were visible acts which make or form a mental picture. Baptism or 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.

To become immersed in Yeshua also means we are to become a new person through Him and return to God through Him. The symbolic idea of immersion is that when a person goes under the water, they left the old person of sin there (dead to sin), and when they come out, they are to be a new person and live right.

Romans 6:11 CJB says we are to think of ourselves as dead to sin. We then become alive to God and are unified with the Messiah. Through the Messiah we receive forgiveness of sins and become new people. Yeshua is the sacrifice for our sins. "He is the kapparah for our sins - and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world.." 1 John 2:2 NKJV. Kapparah means substitutional sacrifice. Yeshua's sacrifice only needed to be done one time for all of time and for the sins of the world for everyone who will accept Him.

Yeshua contrasted the ritual act of being immersed in water and the spiritual act of being immersed in the Holy Spirit. Yeshua said, "For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now;" Acts 1:5 NKJV. We must be immersed in the Holy Spirit; that is a commandment of the Messiah who we must listen to (Deuteronomy 18:15-19). Yeshua said that there are consequences for going through life speaking against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31-32). Kefa said the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) is for our children, for anyone, even whoever God will call (Acts 2:39). As many as God will call, that includes us!

Shaul says we are to be filled over and over with the Holy Spirit and sing to each other and to ourselves (Ephesians 5:18-19). Back in the first century they used to listen to someone sing a psalm (a song) and

think about what is being sung; it is very similar to what we call modern day worship where we sing to God and praise God together. Being aware of God and His presence during the day is also a good thing to practice. We can keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit, how wonderful.

The Holy Spirit also empowers us with gifts of the Holy Spirit. Romans 12:6-8 says we can have gifts of prophecy, serving, teaching, counseling, giving, leadership, and mercy. It says we have gifts, charisma in the Greek. There are other places where gifts are mentioned like in Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Corinthians 12:6-12. These are different lists. Jewish lists are partial lists and that's why Shaul (Paul) gives different lists in other places. For example, when Yeshua gave two commandments from the Old Testament portion it was to summarize the many commandments in the Tanakh. There were more than two commandments. It would be tedious to begin giving all the commandments when we could just give two or four to represent the others.

Both immersion in water and immersion (receiving in the Holy Spirit) in the Holy Spirit are an important part of our spiritual beginnings with the Messiah. When the Eunuch believed in the book of Acts he was immersed in water; Acts 8:38.

When someone accepted Yeshua the Messiah they were also to be immersed in the Holy Spirit. Shaul asks certain believers in Ephesus if they received the Holy Spirit:

Shaul at Ephesus:

He asked them, "Did you receive the Ruach HaKodesh when you came to trust?" "No," they said to him, "we have never even heard that there is such a thing as the Ruach HaKodesh." "In that case," he said, "into what were you immersed?" "The immersion of Yochanan," they answered. Sha'ul said, "Yochanan practiced an immersion in connection with turning from sin to God; but he told the people to put their trust in the one who would come after him, that is, in Yeshua." On hearing this, they were immersed into the name of the Lord Yeshua; and when Sha'ul placed his hands on them, the Ruach HaKodesh came upon them; so that they began speaking in tongues and prophesying."

Acts 19:2-6 NKJV.

They received the Holy Spirit; some of them prophesied and others spoke in tongues.

Baptism is a symbolic ceremony, immersion by the Holy Spirit is something God does after we believe in the Messiah and is a commandment of the Messiah. We need to ask God to be immersed in the Holy Spirit. We may receive it just like the Gentiles did in Acts 10:44 where it just happened or we can get prayer and then receive the Holy Spirit. It is appropriate to get prayer for receiving the Holy Spirit just like Shaul prayed for those at Ephesus.

The Holy Spirit is good; trust in God and keep asking to receive the Holy Spirit. Yeshua said that a good father would not give his child a snake instead of a fish (they may look alike), or a scorpion (scorpion egg - implied) instead of an egg; Luke 11:11-12. Then in Luke 11:13 CJB it says about receiving the Holy Spirit, "So if you, even though you are bad, know how to give your children gifts that are good, how much more will the Father keep giving the Ruach HaKodesh from heaven to those who keep asking him!" God is good and what he gives us is good. Being immersed in water and in the Holy Spirit are important and exciting events in the life of a believer.