

Sharpening the Sword

Baptism

Matthew 3:13 Then Yeshua came from the Galil (Galilee) to the Yarden (Jordan) to be immersed (baptized) by Yochanan (John). ¹⁴ But Yochanan (John) tried to stop him. “You are coming to me? I ought to be immersed (baptized) by you!” ¹⁵ However, Yeshua answered him, “Let it be this way now, because we should do everything righteousness requires.” Then Yochanan (John) let him. ¹⁶ As soon as Yeshua had been immersed (baptized), he came up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, he saw the Spirit of God coming down upon him like a dove, ¹⁷ and a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; I am well pleased with him.”

Matthew 28:16 So the eleven *talmidim* (disciples) went to the hill in the Galil (Galilee) where Yeshua had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they prostrated themselves before him; but some hesitated. ¹⁸ Yeshua came and talked with them. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make people from all nations into *talmidim* (disciples), immersing (baptizing) them into the reality of the Father, the Son and the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit), ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, yes, even until the end of the age.”

Mark 16:14 Later, Yeshua appeared to the Eleven as they were eating, and he reproached them for their lack of trust and their spiritual insensitivity in not having believed those who had seen him after he had risen. ¹⁵ Then he said to them, “As you go throughout the world, proclaim the Good News to all creation. ¹⁶ Whoever trusts and is immersed (baptized) will be saved; whoever does not trust will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will accompany those who do trust: in my name they will drive out demons, speak with new tongues, ¹⁸ not be injured if they handle snakes or drink poison, and heal the sick by laying hands on them.” ¹⁹ So then, after he had spoken to them, the Lord Yeshua was taken up into heaven and **sat at the right hand of God.** ^[b] ²⁰ And they went out and proclaimed everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the message by the accompanying signs.

The following passages are meant for instructions to us of how the beginning of the new WAY (Acts 9, Acts 22, Acts 24) we call “Christianity” started and the WAY we should maintain today.

Acts 2:37 On hearing this, they were stung in their hearts; and they said to Kefa (Peter) and the other emissaries (apostles), “Brothers, what should we do?” 38 Kefa (Peter) answered them, “Turn from sin, return to God, and each of you be immersed (baptized) on the authority of Yeshua the Messiah into forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit)! 39 For the promise is for you, for your children, and for those far away — as many as *ADONAI* our God may call!” 40 He pressed his case with many other arguments and kept pleading with them, “Save yourselves from this perverse generation!” 41 So those who accepted what he said were immersed (baptized), and there were added to the group that day about three thousand people.

Acts 8:12 But when they came to believe Philip, as he announced the Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Yeshua the Messiah, they were immersed (baptized), both men and women. 13 Moreover, Shim'on (Simon) himself came to believe; and after being immersed (baptized), he attached himself closely to Philip; and he was amazed as he saw the miraculous signs and great works of power that kept taking place.

Acts 8:26 An angel of *ADONAI* said to Philip, “Get up, and go southward on the road that goes down from Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) to ‘Azah (Gaza), the desert road.” 27 So he got up and went. On his way, he caught sight of an Ethiopian, a eunuch who was minister in charge of all the treasure of the Kandake (Candise), or queen, of Ethiopia. He had been to Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) to worship; 28 and now, as he was returning home, he was sitting in his chariot, reading the prophet Yesha'yahu (Isaiah). 29 The Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot, and stay close to it.” 30 As Philip ran up, he heard the Ethiopian reading from Yesha'yahu (Isaiah) the prophet. “Do you understand what you’re reading?” he asked. 31 “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” And he invited Philip to climb up and sit with him. 32 Now the portion of the *Tanakh* (Old Testament) that he was reading was this:

**“He was like a sheep led to be slaughtered;
like a lamb silent before the shearer, he does not open his mouth.**

33 He was humiliated and denied justice.

**Who will tell about his descendants,
since his life has been taken from the earth?”^[a]**

³⁴ The eunuch said to Philip, “Here’s my question to you — is the prophet talking about himself or someone else?” ³⁵ Then Philip started to speak — beginning with that passage, he went on to tell him the Good News about Yeshua. ³⁶ As they were going down the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Here’s some water! Is there any reason why I shouldn’t be immersed (baptized)?” ³⁷ ^[b] ³⁸ He ordered the chariot to stop; then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and Philip immersed (baptized) him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch saw no more of him, because he continued on his way — full of joy.

Acts 9:11 The Lord said to him, “Get up and go to Straight Street, to Y’hudah’s (Judas) house; and ask for a man from Tarsus named Sha’ul (Paul); for he is praying, ¹² and in a vision he has seen a man named Hananyah (Ananias) coming in and placing his hands on him to restore his sight.” ¹³ But Hananyah (Ananias) answered, “Lord, many have told me about this man, how much harm he has done to your people in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem); ¹⁴ and here he has a warrant from the head *cohanim* (priest) to arrest everyone who calls on your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, because this man is my chosen instrument to carry my name to the *Goyim* (Gentiles), even to their kings, and to the sons of Isra’el as well. ¹⁶ For I myself will show him how much he will have to suffer on account of my name.” ¹⁷ So Hananyah (Ananias) left and went into the house. Placing his hands on him, he said, “Brother Sha’ul (Paul), the Lord — Yeshua, the one who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here — has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit).” ¹⁸ In that moment, something like scales fell away from Sha’ul’s (Paul’s) eyes; and he could see again. He got up and was immersed (baptized); ¹⁹ then he ate some food and regained his strength.

Acts 22:6 “As I was traveling and approaching Dammesek (Damascus), around noon, suddenly a brilliant light from heaven flashed all around me! ⁷ I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Sha’ul! Sha’ul! Why do you keep persecuting me?’ ⁸ I answered, ‘Sir, who are you?’ ‘I am Yeshua from Natzeret (Nazareth),’ he said to me, ‘and you are persecuting me!’ ⁹ Those who were with me did see the light, but they didn’t hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. ¹⁰ I said ‘What should I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Get up, and go into Dammesek (Damascus), and there you will be told about everything that has been laid out for you to do.’ ¹¹ I had been blinded by the brightness of the light, so my companions led me by the hand into Dammesek (Damascus). ¹² “A man named Hananyah (Ananias), an observant follower of

the *Torah* (instructions) who was highly regarded by the entire Jewish community there, ¹³ came to me, stood by me and said, ‘Brother Sha’ul, see again!’ And at that very moment, I recovered my sight and saw him. ¹⁴ He said, ‘The **God of our fathers**^[a] determined in advance that you should know his will, see the *Tzaddik* (Righteous Person) and hear his voice; ¹⁵ because you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ So now, what are you waiting for? Get up, immerse (baptize) yourself and have your sins washed away as you call on his name.’

Acts 10:36 “Here is the message that he sent to the sons of Isra’el announcing *shalom* (peace) through Yeshua the Messiah, who is Lord of everything. ³⁷ You know what has been going on throughout Y’hudah (Judea), starting from the Galil (Galilee) after the immersion that Yochanan (John) proclaimed; ³⁸ how God anointed Yeshua from Natzeret (Nazareth) with the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) and with power; how Yeshua went about doing good and healing all the people oppressed by the Adversary, because God was with him. ³⁹ “As for us, we are witnesses of everything he did, both in the Judean countryside and in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem). They did away with him by **hanging him on a stake**,^[a] ⁴⁰ but God raised him up on the third day and let him be seen, ⁴¹ not by all the people, but by witnesses God had previously chosen, that is, by us, who ate and drank with him after he had risen again from the dead. ⁴² “Then he commanded us to proclaim and attest to the Jewish people that this man has been appointed by God to judge the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets bear witness to him, that everyone who puts his trust in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” ⁴⁴ Kefa (Peter) was still saying these things when the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) fell on all who were hearing the message. ⁴⁵ All the believers from the Circumcision faction who had accompanied Kefa (Peter) were amazed that the gift of the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) was also being poured out ⁴⁶ on the *Goyim* (Gentiles), for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Kefa’s (Peter’s) response was, ⁴⁷ “Is anyone prepared to prohibit these people from being immersed (baptized) in water? After all, they have received the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit), just as we did.” ⁴⁸ And he ordered that they be immersed (baptized) in the name of Yeshua the Messiah. Then they asked Kefa (Peter) to stay on with them for a few days.

Acts 16:11 Sailing from Troas, we made a straight run to Samothrace; the next day we went to Neapolis (Neapolis); ¹² and from there, we went on to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that part of Macedonia. We spent a few days in this city; ¹³ then on *Shabbat*, we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we understood a *minyán* (quorum needed for public

prayer. 10 people minimum) met. We sat down and began speaking to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴ One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in fine purple cloth. She was already a “God-fearer,” and the Lord opened up her heart to respond to what Sha’ul (Paul) was saying. ¹⁵ After she and the members of her household had been immersed (baptized), she gave us this invitation: “If you consider me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay in my house.” And she insisted till we went.

Acts 16:25 Around midnight, Sha’ul (Paul) and Sila (Silas) were praying and singing hymns to God, while the other prisoners listened attentively. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a violent earthquake which shook the prison to its foundations. All the doors flew open and everyone’s chains came loose. ²⁷ The jailer awoke, and when he saw the doors open he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, for he assumed that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Sha’ul (Paul) shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We’re all here!” ²⁹ Calling for lights, the jailer ran in, began to tremble and fell down in front of Sha’ul (Paul) and Sila (Silas). ³⁰ Then, leading them outside, he said, “Men, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ They said, “Trust in the Lord Yeshua, and you will be saved — you and your household!” ³² Whereupon they told him and everyone in his household the message about the Lord. ³³ Then, even at that late hour of the night, the jailer took them and washed off their wounds; and without delay, he and all his people were immersed (baptized). ³⁴ After that, he brought them up to his house and set food in front of them; and he and his entire household celebrated their having come to trust in God.

Acts 18:4 Sha’ul (Paul) also began carrying on discussions every *Shabbat* in the synagogue, where he tried to convince both Jews and Greeks. ⁵ But after Sila (Silas) and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Sha’ul (Paul) felt pressed by the urgency of the message and testified in depth to the Jews that Yeshua is the Messiah. ⁶ However when they set themselves against him and began hurling insults, he shook out his clothes and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! For my part, I am clean; from now on, I will go to the *Goyim* (Gentiles)!”

⁷ So he left them and went into the home of a “God-fearer” named Titius Justus, whose house was right next door to the synagogue. ⁸ Crispus, the president of the synagogue, came to trust in the Lord, along with his whole household; also many of the Corinthians who heard trusted and were immersed (baptized).

Acts 19:1 While Apollos was in Corinth, Sha'ul (Paul) completed his travels through the inland country and arrived at Ephesus, where he found a few *talmidim* (disciples). ² He asked them, "Did you receive the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) 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* (Holy Spirit)." ³ "In that case," he said, "into what were you immersed (baptized)?" "The immersion (baptism) of Yochanan (John)," they answered. ⁴ Sha'ul (Paul) said, "Yochanan (John) practiced an immersion (baptism) 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." ⁵ On hearing this, they were immersed (baptized) into the name of the Lord Yeshua; ⁶ and when Sha'ul (Paul) placed his hands on them, the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) came upon them; so that they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. ⁷ In all, there were about twelve of these men.

How can it be that we should or even could think that conversion comes any other WAY (Acts 9, 19, 24) then the WAY we see it all through the book of Acts? After all the book of Acts truly means acts or practices of the Apostles. Jesus taught us what to do throughout the 4 gospels and the Apostles taught us how to do it.

Below is a passage of scripture that has been confusing to many but I want to use it to explain how important the first century "Christians" thought of baptism even when they were being deceived and a form of this deception is still active today.

1Corinthians 15:1 Now, brothers, I must remind you of the Good News which I proclaimed to you, and which you received, and on which you have taken your stand, ² and by which you are being saved — provided you keep holding fast to the message I proclaimed to you. For if you don't, your trust will have been in vain. ³ For among the first things I passed on to you was what I also received, namely this: the Messiah died for our sins, in accordance with what the *Tanakh* (Old Testament) says; ⁴ and he was buried; and he was raised on the third day, in accordance with what the *Tanakh* (Old Testament) says; ⁵ and he was seen by Kefa (Peter), then by the Twelve; ⁶ and afterwards he was seen by more than five hundred brothers at one time, the majority of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷ Later he was seen by Ya'akov (James), then by all the emissaries (apostles); ⁸ and last of all he was seen by me, even though I was born at the wrong time. ⁹ For I am the least of all the emissaries (apostles), unfit to be called an emissary (apostle), because I persecuted the Messianic Community of God. ¹⁰ But by God's

grace I am what I am, and his grace towards me was not in vain; on the contrary, I have worked harder than all of them, although it was not I but the grace of God with me. ¹¹ Anyhow, whether I or they, this is what we proclaim, and this is what you believed. ¹² But if it has been proclaimed that the Messiah has been raised from the dead, how is it that some of you are saying there is no such thing as a resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then the Messiah has not been raised; ¹⁴ and if the Messiah has not been raised, then what we have proclaimed is in vain; also your trust is in vain; ¹⁵ furthermore, we are shown up as false witnesses for God in having testified that God raised up the Messiah, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then the Messiah has not been raised either; ¹⁷ and if the Messiah has not been raised, your trust is useless, and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Also, if this is the case, those who died in union with the Messiah are lost. ¹⁹ If it is only for this life that we have put our hope in the Messiah, we are more pitiable than anyone. ²⁰ But the fact is that the Messiah *has* been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died. ²¹ For since death came through a man, also the resurrection of the dead has come through a man. ²² For just as in connection with Adam all die, so in connection with the Messiah all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: the Messiah is the firstfruits; then those who belong to the Messiah, at the time of his coming; ²⁴ then the culmination, when he hands over the Kingdom to God the Father, after having put an end to every rulership, yes, to every authority and power. ²⁵ For he has to rule until he puts all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be done away with will be death, ²⁷ for **“He put everything in subjection under his feet.”**^[a] But when it says that **“everything”** has been subjected, obviously the word does not include God, who is himself the one subjecting everything to the Messiah. ²⁸ Now when everything has been subjected to the Son, then he will subject himself to God, who subjected everything to him; so that God may be everything in everyone.

²⁹ Were it otherwise, what would the people accomplish who are immersed (baptized) on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not actually raised, why are people immersed (baptized) for them?

Such a practice existed amongst the Marcionites in the second century, and still earlier amongst a sect called the Corinthians. The idea evidently was that whatever benefit flowed from baptism might be thus vicariously secured for the deceased Christian. When a person who came to faith but was not baptized deceased they hid a living man under the bed of the deceased; then coming to the bed of the dead man they spoke to him, and asked whether he would receive baptism, and he making no answer, the other replied in his place, and so they baptized the ‘living for the dead.’

This custom sprang up amongst the Jewish converts, who had been accustomed to something similar in their own faith. If a Jew died without having been purified from some ceremonial uncleanness, some living person had the necessary ablution performed on them, and the dead were so accounted clean.

Interesting that around 350AD John Chrysostom, c. 349 – 407, Archbishop of Constantinople adapted this idea to baptize all infants at birth to avoid such possible tragedies.

Some say what about the thief on the cross? He wasn't baptized.

Luke 23:39 One of the criminals hanging there hurled insults at him. "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰ But the other one spoke up and rebuked the first, saying, "Have you no fear of God? You're getting the same punishment as he is. ⁴¹ Ours is only fair; we're getting what we deserve for what we did. But this man did nothing wrong." ⁴² Then he said, "Yeshua, remember me when you come as King." ⁴³ Yeshua said to him, "Yes! I promise that you will be with me today in Gan-'Eden (paradise)."

He died before the glory of the resurrection. No one was a "Christian" before the resurrection. He was "saved" like in every other old testament saint; the belief in the coming of the Messiah's Kingship.

We learned through the ancient Hebrew wedding that we cannot enter into our betrothal with Jesus without first performing a mitveh (ceremonial cleansing; i.e. baptism) but why? What is the significance of it?

Romans 6:3 Don't you know that those of us who have been immersed (baptized) into the Messiah Yeshua have been immersed (baptized) into his death? ⁴ Through immersion (baptism) into his death we were buried with him; so that just as, through the glory of the Father, the Messiah was raised from the dead, likewise we too might live a new life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Colossians 2:11 Also it was in union with him that you were circumcised with a circumcision not done by human hands, but accomplished by stripping away the old nature's control over the body. In this circumcision done by the Messiah, ¹² you were buried along with him by being

immersed (baptized); and in union with him, you were also raised up along with him by God's faithfulness that worked when he raised Yeshua from the dead. ¹³ You were dead because of your sins, that is, because of your "foreskin," your old nature. But God made you alive along with the Messiah by forgiving you all your sins. ¹⁴ He wiped away the bill of charges against us. Because of the regulations, it stood as a testimony against us; but he removed it by nailing it to the execution-stake. ¹⁵ Stripping the rulers and authorities of their power, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by means of the stake.

Galatians 3:24 Accordingly, the *Torah* functioned as a custodian until the Messiah came, so that we might be declared righteous on the ground of trusting and being faithful. ²⁵ But now that the time for this trusting faithfulness has come, we are no longer under a custodian. ²⁶ For in union with the Messiah, you are all children of God through this trusting faithfulness; ²⁷ because as many of you as were immersed (baptized) into the Messiah have clothed yourselves with the Messiah, in whom ²⁸ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor freeman, neither male nor female; for in union with the Messiah Yeshua, you are all one.

1Corinthians 10:1 For, brothers, I don't want you to miss the significance of what happened to our fathers. All of them were guided by the pillar of cloud, and they all passed through the sea, ² and in connection with the cloud and with the sea they all immersed (baptized) themselves into Moshe, ³ also they all ate the same food from the Spirit, ⁴ and they all drank the same drink from the Spirit — for they drank from a Spirit-sent Rock which followed them, and that Rock was the Messiah. ⁵ Yet with the majority of them God was not pleased, so their bodies were strewn across the desert. ⁶ Now these things took place as prefigurative historical events, warning us not to set our hearts on evil things as they did. ⁷ Don't be idolaters, as some of them were — as the *Tanakh* (Old Testament) puts it, "**The people sat down to eat and drink, then got up to indulge in revelry.**"^[a] ⁸ And let us not engage in sexual immorality, as some of them did, with the consequence that 23,000 died in a single day. ⁹ And let us not put the Messiah to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by snakes. ¹⁰ And don't grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the Destroying Angel. ¹¹ These things happened to them as prefigurative historical events, and they were written down as a warning to us who are living in the *acharit-hayamim* (end times). ¹² Therefore, let anyone who thinks he is standing up be careful not to fall! ¹³ No temptation has seized you beyond what people normally experience, and God can be trusted not to allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear. On the contrary, along with the temptation he will also provide the way out, so that you will be able to endure.

1Peter 3:18 For the Messiah himself died for sins, once and for all, a righteous person on behalf of unrighteous people, so that he might bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but brought to life by the Spirit; ¹⁹ and in this form he went and made a proclamation to the imprisoned spirits, ²⁰ to those who were disobedient long ago, in the days of Noach (Noah), when God waited patiently during the building of the ark, in which a few people — to be specific, eight — were delivered by means of water. ²¹ This also prefigures what delivers us now, the water of immersion (baptism), which is not the removal of dirt from the body, but one's pledge to keep a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. ²² He has gone into heaven and is **at the right hand of God**,^[c] with angels, authorities and powers subject to him.

Genesis 6:1 In time, when men began to multiply on earth, and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were attractive; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. ³ *ADONAI* said, "My Spirit will not live in human beings forever, for they too are flesh; therefore their life span is to be 120 years." ⁴ The N'filim (Nephilim's) were on the earth in those days, and also afterwards, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them; these were the ancient heroes, men of renown. ⁵ *ADONAI* saw that the people on earth were very wicked, that all the imaginings of their hearts were always of evil only. ⁶ *ADONAI* regretted that he had made humankind on the earth; it grieved his heart. ⁷ *ADONAI* said, "I will wipe out humankind, whom I have created, from the whole earth; and not only human beings, but animals, creeping things and birds in the air; for I regret that I ever made them." ⁸ But Noach (Noah) found grace in the sight of *ADONAI*.