

Book of Hebrews Part 20: Urgency of Baptism; Born Again; Philip and the Eunuch (2/2/019)

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://cornerfringe.com/media/vtf4vk3/book-of-hebrews-part-20>.

***Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliterate, English word. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.**

We are going to continue to dig into this topic of baptism. I want to begin by drawing from some traditional Jewish thought in regard to the subject. I want to do this in order to peel back the layers of understanding so we can truly understand the significance of this baptism that is spoken of in the New Testament. I want us to be able to feel the weight of it.

With that said, I want to open up with the following commentary. The context of this commentary is conversion in that it is talking about Gentiles being grafted into Israel. [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](#) (*My Jewish Learning, Conversion* by Rabbi Maurice Lamm).

One of the first things we talked about in the last message was baptism is not about removing dirt from your skin. It is 100% spiritual. Notice that it says – [...to symbolize a change-of-soul](#). There's a transformation even in traditional Judaism. They recognize when you go through a mikveh, there's a total transformation. The end result is you're not going to be the same.

Continuing on—[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](#). Last week we discussed the division even within Protestantism. The question is: do we sprinkle or do we immerse? When you explore the question going back in the history of Judaism, it was always full immersion; being totally immersed under water.

That, however, was not the point I was attempting to make. So continuing on—[No other religious act is so freighted with meaning as this one...](#) Let that statement sink in for a second. If I am going to do this topic of the elementary principle of baptism any justice today, you need to hear this statement. You need to feel the weight of it. When you look at the statement and think of all the things that exist in the Jewish faith, all the things you can participate in, nothing has greater weight than mikveh in the context of conversion.

Now take that and go to the New Testament where we find one baptism, one mikveh, talked about. That baptism is the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah Yeshua. Now I ask you, is there anything greater in weight than that testimony? There is not. This is amazing insight and we need to feel the weight of it.

The commentary goes on—...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. This is what baptism is. If you have not been baptized, this understanding needs to be at the forefront of that decision. When you are getting baptized, you are making a commitment to the LORD, to a new idea, and to His ways. You walked in your old ways; you've been doing things according to your own manner and your own thoughts. As you were confronted with so many situations in every-day life, you made decisions based on what you thought were best. However, when you go through mikveh, now you do what God thinks is best. It is a total transformation.

I want you to think of Yeshua. He told us— **If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me** (Luke 9:23). As it says in Psalm 85:13—**Righteousness will go before Him, And shall make His footsteps our pathway.**

As we continue on, this is what we read—**The water of the mikveh is designed to ritually cleanse a person from deeds of the past.** Notice it is not from dirt. It is from sin. **The convert is considered by Jewish Law to be like a newborn child** (emphasis added). Oh my! Where have you heard that before? We have heard it in the New Testament! This is exactly what the New Testament portrays in regard to mikveh.

Continuing—**In a sense, it is nothing short of the spiritual drama of death and rebirth cast onto the canvas of the convert's soul. ...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 a Jew in every respect"** (emphasis added; *My Jewish Learning, Conversion* by Rabbi Maurice Lamm).

Think about that statement. The moment, the very second this Gentile, who was cast off, totally separated from Israel, emerges out of the water, he has a new family and a new identity. A Jew who wouldn't have given him two seconds of the day, who would not have sat down and eaten with him, will come and do so now.

If you want to understand what baptism really means, let that sink in. We need to be conveying this as part of the gospel and the elementary principle. If you want to be a part of God's family, God's Kingdom, and you want to be redeemed and have hope, then go through the mikveh of Yeshua.

You see, this is not about having some kind of tingling sensation or emotion when you come out of the water so you can identify with this and know it is super spiritual. That is not it at all. You need to believe the reality that when you come out of the water, you have a new family, new promises, and have forgiveness. These are the waters of hope. Your old self is dead and now you are going to live a new life with a new identity.

I want to take you into the New Testament and build on this. Here we find the Apostle Paul talking to a Gentile convert, so this fits quite well with what we are talking about. Titus 3:4-5—⁴ **But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,** ⁵ **not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us through...** (emphasis added).

I highlight this because last week we saw Peter use this very word. “Through” in the Greek is διὰ (*dia*). Peter used this word διὰ to describe how Noah was saved **through**, διὰ, these baptismal waters; what we call the flood.

So we find Apostle Paul, a Jew, speaking to a Gentile, and he says—**...He saved us through the washing** [Paul is talking about baptism] **of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit** (emphasis added).

Now this gets even more fascinating in light of the commentary we just read. When we go to the Greek, we find the word “regeneration” is Παλιγγενεσία (*paliggenesia*). What does it mean? It means rebirth or the washing of rebirth. This is what this is and has always been in Jewish tradition. This concept of going through a mikveh is that you're born again and there is a new life.

In the 70's there was a movement known as the Jesus People Movement. I got saved, and my parents got saved in this movement. In fact, a lot of people got saved through this movement.

The Jesus People Movement had a motto that identified them. The term, or motto, they popularized was “born-again Christian”. My dad was heavily involved in ministry so I got to see something point blank. What I saw was you could recognize someone who was part of the Jesus People Movement because they would start evangelizing and say, “Hey. Do you believe in Jesus?” The person could respond, “Yes. I absolutely believe in Jesus.” The next thing the Jesus People Movement person would ask them was, “But are you born again?”

How many of you know what I'm talking about? Were you part of this movement? They would ask, “But are you born again?” So the person being evangelized to might respond, “Well, I read the Bible,” and the comeback was, “But are you born again?” Again, “Well, I go to church,” and again from the Jesus People Movement evangelist came, “But are you born again?” The person being evangelized might add, “I pray,” to which they would hear, “But are you born again?” The evangelist just kept coming at the person with this question, time after time, because it was the litmus test to know whether or not someone was saved. The people of this movement recognized the fact we have to be born again.

Why did they utilize this? Why did they believe so strongly in this? Because Yeshua Himself set that precedent in His words found in John 3:1-2—¹ **There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;** ² **this man came to Jesus by night...** I want to stop here and explain something. It is very significant that Nicodemus is coming to Yeshua by night. He did this so no one could see him. If you go just a couple of chapters past this verse in John, you find the leaders of the Pharisees had come together and made the decision that if anyone confesses that Yeshua is the Messiah, they were to be put out of the synagogue. It was dangerous to be a Pharisee and to even ponder Yeshua would be the Messiah.

Continuing in John 3:2-3—**...and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”** ³ **Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God** (emphasis added).

This is why it became so popular to say, "I'm a born-again Christian. Are you born again?" This is life and death. If you are not born again, you are not saved. You can tell people you are saved, but Yeshua's words stand.

Continuing in John 3:4-5—⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit** he cannot enter the kingdom of God (emphasis added).

This is life and death. You must be born again. Yeshua is referring to His baptism in the waters of hope and the Spirit. This concept of bringing together baptism with the Spirit of God is the mattock. This is a theme in the New Testament. We just read it in Titus where the Apostle Paul brought together the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Last week we looked at Acts 19:2 where we found Paul asking the believers in Ephesus— **Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?**

They responded by telling Paul they had not heard there was a Holy Spirit. To this Paul asked them what baptism they received because it made no sense to Paul. Paul associated the baptism of Yeshua as directly linked to the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

This is what we see Yeshua doing. He set the precedent for this and we can see it right here in John 3.

Now with that said, I want to build on this. I want to show you some additional Jewish commentary in regard to this concept of being born again and the effects of that. **The Baptism of the proselyte has for its purpose his cleansing from the impurity of idolatry** [sin, not cleansed from dirt but cleansed from sin; remember, this is Jewish tradition] **and the restoration to the purity of a new-born man** (emphasis added, *Jewish Encyclopedia.com* by Kaufmann Kohler, Samuel Krauss). He's born again.

Continuing—**The bathing in the water is to constitute a rebirth, wherefore "the ger** [a stranger; a Gentile separated from Israel] **is like a child just born"; and he must bathe "in the name of God"—"leshem shamayim"** (emphasis added). Think about that statement. Do you want to understand baptism and fully appreciate what you're going into as you go into these waters of hope, and what is required? In doing so, you must be baptized in the name of God.

Fast forward in the New Testament and look at baptism. That is exactly what you must understand. Acts 4:12—**...there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.** It is only at the name of Yeshua and His testimony that we are to be baptized. Anything aside from that is not a legitimate baptism.

So this commentary contains some amazing statements such as— **...he must bathe "in the name of God"—"leshem shamayim."** Leshem shamayim technically is the name of Heaven, which he goes on to explain—**...that is, assume the yoke of God's kingdom** (emphasis added). This is what happens when you go into these waters of hope. By doing so, you are taking on the yoke of God's kingdom and Yeshua. Remember what Yeshua said in Matthew 1:29-30—²⁹ **Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me...**³⁰ **For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**

You need to understand something. There's deep significance to baptism. When you come into His baptism, you put the yoke of the Kingdom of God on your shoulders. This means the Torah and the Commandments. You will not walk in your own ways anymore. This is your commitment.

Continuing—...that is, **assume the yoke of God's kingdom imposed upon him by the one who leads him to Baptism, or else he is not admitted into Judaism** (emphasis added, *Jewish Encyclopedia.com* by Kaufmann Kohler, Samuel Krauss). In other words, if you do not go through the mikveh in the name of God and take the yoke of his Kingdom upon you, you will never be admitted into Israel. You're still an outcast. This is absolutely a biblical fact in regard to the relation of Yeshua's baptism that we read about in the New Testament. This is the truth of it. We will never be admitted into Israel. So these things must happen; we must be baptized. That whole event must happen.

With that said, I want to continue on with the commentary, and we're going to get to the blessing part. This is not just about getting everything right and understanding what you're taking on, but it's also about what is going to be counted to you. We need to know the full picture. Remember that you were a Gentile, but you went through the mikveh and literally called on the name of God; you were baptized in His name. You assumed His yoke; therefore, you are now a newborn.

Here is what it says—**The newborn Jew takes on a Hebrew name, but a given name only is not sufficient to locate a person within the Jewish tradition. When Jews sign legal documents or are called up to the Torah, their parents' names are appended to their Hebrew names to locate them in Jewish spiritual space.** [Pay close attention to this] **A convert traditionally adopts Abraham and Sarah as spiritual parents** and in legal situations is referred to as “ben Avraham Avinu,” “son of our Father, Abraham,” or “bat Sarah Imenu,” “daughter of our Mother, Sarah” (emphasis added, *My Jewish Learning, How to Convert to Judaism*).

In other words, as a Gentile, when you come into the Jewish faith through baptism, you are ascribed new parents because the Jewish people have always identified a person as to whose son you are. You can even see this in the New Testament. Peter was called Simon bar Jonah. You are identified through your heritage; you are identified to your parents.

This is mind-blowing to me that in the Jewish tradition when a Gentile comes into the faith he assumes the parents; Abraham and Sarah. These are his ascribed parents. You want to talk about heritage! You want to talk about blessing! This is what we're given!

Listen to the words of Paul in Galatians 3:27-29—²⁷ **For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.** ²⁸ **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.** ²⁹ **And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise** (emphasis added).

How powerful is that? This is the reality; what we just read in Jewish tradition is exactly what Paul just laid out. This is what happens when we go through this mikveh, these waters of hope in the Messiah Yeshua, we come out and have blessed parents, and they're not just any parents. What does it say at the end of that verse? **...heirs according to the promise.** What is an heir? It's the one who assumes the inheritance of his parents.

This is what you need to understand. When we go through these waters of hope, and we come out immediately just as Jewish as any Jew through faith in the Messiah Yeshua, we have parents who are ascribed to us. We become children of Abraham and Sarah, and that's not lip service or simply being able to say, "Abraham and Sarah are my parents." No! We are heirs according to the promise given to Abraham. A child of Abraham receives all the promises that were given to Abraham; they become yours, and you have an inheritance. That is what this is about.

So when you literally come out of these waters of hope, you are "bathed" in the riches of the Kingdom of God. Look at what Paul says in Ephesians 2:12—...that at that time you [Gentiles] were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth... (emphasis added). That word commonwealth in the Greek is πολιτεία (*politeia*). It means citizenship. You were not of Israel. You were not a citizen.

Continuing in Ephesians 2:12-13— ...of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise [meaning all the promises given to Abraham and his descendants; they were not ours], having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

This is what it's about. It's about literally coming out of the water to the riches of the Kingdom of God and to having them, knowing they are ours. We now have all those beautiful promises of an eternal inheritance. They all fall upon you.

I want to take you to the book of Acts and show you a couple passages that really reflect the intensity by which baptism was preached. When I look out at the church today, I do not find this intensity, and it is terrifying. In these verses, you're going to see pure urgency; pure necessity. What you're not going to see is complacency or lethargy.

I want to begin by taking you to Act 8:26-27—²⁶ Now an angel of the LORD spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. ²⁷ So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship.

Here's the thing about this particular man. He's a Gentile, and we are really blessed with the treasure trove of riches regarding details about him and this event. The first thing you need to understand is he is a eunuch. This is very important to understand. He's been emasculated. Given that, it is not surprising to see this eunuch in such a high position of power because it was common for a eunuch. They were thought to be trustworthy. Typically they would sit in a role of taking on a king's household including his harem.

Something that's interesting about eunuchs is found in Deuteronomy 23. What it talks about is they are not to enter the assembly of the LORD. They are forbidden from doing that.

What is interesting about this particular eunuch is he is a God-fearer. Keep in mind he is not a proselyte because he would have had to been circumcised and gone through mikveh. So we obviously know he was not a proselyte. However, he is a God-fearer, and that information is critical to this story. He went to Jerusalem for one purpose; he wants to worship the God of Israel. He had turned his heart to the LORD God.

With that said, let's continue on in the story in Acts 8:28-29—**And he was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.** ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Phillip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.”

This reminds me of Romans 8:28— **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God.** This is an amazing thing because precisely as this eunuch is reading the prophet Isaiah the LORD is sending Philip to go overtake the chariot. As we continue, you are going to see how amazing this is.

Acts 8:30—**So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah.** This is what's amazing; he's reading Scripture out loud. He doesn't care what people think. Can you imagine being in a coffee house, sitting with your Bible open, and just reading Scripture out loud? It's not going to go over well. But here you have this man, and he doesn't care. He's not a Jew; he is not just a Gentile, he is a eunuch.

I will take this a step further, just to put this into context. If you read Josephus' writings, you will find he speaks very unfairly of the eunuchs. They were anathema to the Jewish people, which stems from the reality of the Torah.

Starting again in Acts 8:30-31—³⁰ **So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”** ³¹ **And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?”** This man is filled with humility, honor, and integrity. You can see it in his rebuttal. **And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him.** This whole event is insane because no Jew in their right mind would ever sit with a Gentile much less a eunuch Gentile. It's not going to happen. Philip would never do something like this unless the Holy Spirit instructed him. So here you have an authentic move of the Spirit, and you're looking at this, and this whole thing is unusual.

Now we continue in Acts 8:32-33—³² **The place in the Scripture which he read was this, “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opened not His mouth.** ³³ **In humiliation His justice was taken away, and who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.”** You cannot make this stuff up. He was reading Isaiah 53, one of the most predominant Messianic passages in all of Scripture. This passage has brought more Jewish people into the faith than virtually any other passage in the Hebrew Bible. Here is this eunuch, and he just happens to be reading the part about the death and resurrection of the Messiah Yeshua at the exact time the Spirit drives Philip to overtake the chariot. The Spirit sent Philip to go preach the gospel to him. It is absolutely amazing!

Continuing on in Acts 8:34—**So the eunuch answered Philip and said, “I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?”** This is fascinating because this is even debated today. The anti-missionaries will tell you this passage is not about Yeshua or a messiah. They will tell you this is about Israel even though there are so many problems with that proposition that it is not even funny. But in this verse we find this eunuch debating this issue.

Continuing in Acts 8:35—³⁵ **Then Philip opened his mouth and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.** Philip began in Isaiah 53 and preached the gospel to this Gentile eunuch.

Now here's what's interesting about this. Luke doesn't record the details of this conversation. I, like others, come across a passage in Scripture like this and want to know more. I would have liked being there right at that moment in order to hear what was transpiring. Fortunately for us, even though we

did not get to see all of the details that took place, we do have some details, and we can extrapolate these details based upon the eunuch's response to Philip. This is where things get really powerful. This is what we read in Acts 8:36—**Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized** (emphasis added)?

Think about the context of this. Philip is preaching the gospel and the elementary principles to this eunuch. We know for fact one of the things Philip conveyed was the eunuch needed to be baptized. He conveyed the urgency of baptism because here you have this eunuch receiving the gospel, he's hearing it from Philip, and what is he doing? He's looking for water. He is convicted in heart and overwhelmed with urgency to go out and be baptized; he wants to do it immediately. He actually asked—**What hinders me from being baptized?**

Phillip is going to give the requirements for baptism, which is something that could specifically hinder us from being baptized. This is what we read in Acts 8:37—**Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may"** (emphasis added).

This is the key requirement. So the eunuch sees water; he has felt the conviction he has to be baptized and do so immediately. He says to Philip—**What hinders me from being baptized?** Philip's response is —**If you believe.**

Now the question is: believe what? What is it that we are supposed to believe? Pay very close attention to what we read in Acts 8:37—**And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"** (emphasis added).

It is very important. He did not offer this title on his own. We know this is part of the details Philip had conveyed when he was expressing the gospel of the Kingdom, the gospel of Yeshua. Philip had conveyed to him Yeshua is the Son of God and not just a messiah. There were many messiahs in Israel's history. There were many anointed ones who had come and gone. Yeshua is more than that. He's more than an anointed one. He is the Son of God.

I want you to consider something. When Yeshua was driven out into the wilderness, Satan confronts Him. Satan goes to war against Yeshua. What was the one title Satan went after? Satan said to Yeshua—**If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread** (Matthew 4:3). Again in Matthew 4:6—**If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down** [off the pinnacle of the temple]. Think about that.

We also find Yeshua in a conversation with His Apostles asking them—¹³ **Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?** ¹⁴ **So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."** ¹⁵ **He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"** ¹⁶ **Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"** (Matthew 16:3-16).

This is huge! This is how we define our faith—by God having sent His only Son. This is what separates us from the world.

So the eunuch confesses with his mouth—**I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God** (Acts 8:37). What happens then? **So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him** (Acts 8:38). With the confession—**I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God**—he wasted no time and commanded the chariot to stop so he could be baptized. That

is a powerful example of how to respond to the confession of Yeshua being Messiah. You notice there was no deliberation in regard to the eunuch getting baptized; absolutely none. We don't see any lethargy or complacency. There's none of this.

There is one more thing to this story I think is pretty incredible. Philip began preaching the gospel to this eunuch from Isaiah 53. If you continue reading just a couple chapters more, you come to a passage in Isaiah 56. I want you to put this into context because this is how God speaks. I share this with you because you need to understand God will speak to you in supernatural ways if you just open up His Bible and read it for yourself. If you do that, He will speak individually to you.

Look at what we read in Isaiah 56:3-4—³ **Do not let the son of the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD speak, saying, "The LORD has utterly separated me from His people"; nor let the eunuch say, "Here I am, a dry tree"** (emphasis added). Here we have the LORD speaking in a way that would have gone directly to this eunuch's heart. He would have come to read this piece, and it would have floored him. He knew who he is. He knew what the Jewish people thought of him. He completely understood this.

Continuing in Isaiah 56:4-5—⁴ **For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant, ⁵ even to them I will give in My house and within My walls a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.**

So we have this eunuch who is seeking God and wants to be saved. He is being offered the waters of hope, offered a new identity, and offered a place as a child of Abraham and Sarah, and all of those promises are right in the Bible. Can you imagine as he is going through all of this how this would have overwhelmed him? I'm going to tell you, when you pick up the Bible and read it with that same heart, God will speak to you that same way.

Let me take you to another story, and this particular story is the Apostle Paul's personal testimony. He is given an opportunity to address his own brethren. He is not talking to Gentiles; he is addressing his own Jewish brethren. A crowd has formed to listen to him because he has caused a lot of havoc. He begins by telling them in the Hebrew language, "I'm a Jew born in Tarsus of Cilicia. I studied at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the most revered rabbi's of the day. In the strictness of the Torah, I've kept it. I even persecuted the church."

So we see Paul is sharing his testimony with them. He's going through all of that at the front end, but then he gets to the crescendo of the testimony, which was his whole experience on the road to Damascus where the glory of the LORD Yeshua shone so brightly it knocked him off his animal. As a result of this experience, he went blind and had to be led by the hand of the men who were traveling with him to Damascus.

During this process, the LORD comes to a man known as Ananias and He commands Ananias—**Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel** (Acts 9:15). So the Apostle Paul is with this crowd of Jewish people, and he is sharing his testimony. We pick it up in Acts 22:12-13—¹² **Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the Law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, ¹³ came to me; and he stood and said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.'** And at that same hour I looked up at him. ¹⁴ **Then he said, 'The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. ¹⁵ For**

you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ **And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the LORD'** (emphasis added).

This is Paul's own testimony. The moment Ananias comes to Paul and tells him the LORD has called him into the ministry, he is healed and Ananias says—...**why are you waiting?** He doesn't say, "You know, if the mood grabs you, at some point you might want to consider being baptized; however it is not necessary. It's not important, but it's a good thing to do. This is what we're all doing these days is an outward expression of faith."

He doesn't say anything like that. He comes out and says—...**why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized...** Again, what is the point of this baptism? To—**wash away your sins.** It's not that the water is taking dirt off; it's that I'm going into these waters of hope, of the death and resurrection of the Messiah Yeshua. That is the testimony, and it washes away my sins. This is what we're commanded to do. It's not a suggestion. You can't find it being presented as a suggestion in any way at any level in the New Testament, and you certainly don't find it presented that way before the New Testament when you look at Jewish tradition.

Let me take you to one more story in Acts 10. Peter, like Philip before Peter, was commanded to go to Gentile converts. In this story, Peter has a vision; Cornelius has a vision, and the LORD sends Peter to Cornelius' house. The LORD brings these two together. He wants Peter to go to Cornelius to tell him what he is supposed to do.

So Peter is coming to Cornelius for this purpose; to preach the gospel. Cornelius has called his friends and family to hear the words Peter has to speak. This is a big to-do. This is what we read in Acts 10:43-46—⁴³ **To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."** ⁴⁴ **While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.** ⁴⁵ **And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.** ⁴⁶ **For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God** (emphasis added).

Now, you have to think about this situation. The reason the Jews were astonished was because they were still not in a place where they were going to go to Gentiles. In fact, because of this episode, later on Peter is going to get reamed out because he went to Gentiles and ate with them. Word got out about this, and Peter actually gets rebuked by his own brethren. They take him to task wanting to know how he dare do this. I mean, wasn't it forbidden by Law? What fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? What communion has light with darkness? What fellowship has Christ with Belial? Absolutely none. Israel has always been called out to be separate and holy.

So this whole event is crazy enough. God has sent them to these Gentiles. In addition, these Jews are watching the Holy Spirit fall down upon the Gentiles. The Jews are in awe, especially considering what happened in Acts 2, which was Shavuot, Pentecost. The Jews from the Diaspora are meeting in Jerusalem and all these Jews from around the world witnessed the Holy Spirit fall upon the Jewish people. That in itself was an awesome thing. That left them mystified, but to witness the same event happen to the Gentiles was unthinkable. This is why they were baffled.

We continue in Acts 10:46-47—⁴⁶ **Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have** (emphasis added)?" I have to say this. Thinking in modern-day terms, in Evangelical terms, if you're anointed with the Holy Spirit, who cares

about baptism? Isn't the Holy Spirit the proof of our inheritance? Isn't that the final goal? I would tell you, "Absolutely."

You need to understand this situation is completely different. It's out of order. Normally you get baptized, and post baptism there is an anointing of the Holy Spirit. There are so many unique times in Scripture where we read about things that happen out of the ordinary. We find specific men in Scripture not dying, and yet Scripture is very clear— **And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment** (Hebrews 9:27).

So this is the situation we have here. We have something very unusual, and the first thing out of Peter's mouth is— **Can anyone forbid water?** Do you want to feel the weight of baptism? Can you see how important baptism was even after they received the promise of the Holy Spirit? This is what Peter's concerned about.

So we can see this is not something that is just good to do. It's commanded. In fact, what does it say as Peter goes on in Acts 10:48? ⁴⁸ **And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the LORD. Then they asked him to stay a few days** (emphasis added). Do you think we should be putting some weight on this topic? Absolutely. It merits it. In fact, when you look at the early church out of the New Testament age around the early 2nd century, one of the documents we looked at was the Didache. I want to take you back to that document and show you something they say in regard to just how important baptism really is.

This is what it says—**...but let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist**. Let's stop here. Don't go all Catholic on me just yet. When you think Eucharist, you tend to think Catholic Church. The term Eucharist is Greek, and it simply means Thanksgiving. What it is referring to here in the broader context is Passover. It's referring to the body and the blood of Yeshua and how we were commanded—**...do this in remembrance of me** (Luke 22:19).

Starting again at the beginning of the Didache verse—**But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptized into the name of the LORD** (emphasis added). It goes on to say—**for the LORD has also spoken concerning this: "Do not give what is holy to dogs"** (Didache 9:5).

Do you see the weight of emphasis? When you go to the Torah, and you look at Exodus 12, you will see the strangers, foreigners, and aliens are not allowed to participate in the Passover unless there is full conversion. It is absolutely amazing!

So then we come to the Didache, which was written around the early 2nd century, and they're laying out these ground rules. Nobody's going to do this with the Jewish people—**...except those who have been baptized into the name of the LORD**.

So you see there is no complacency. There's nothing but urgency. Given all of that, we will close with this verse in Mark 16:16. These are Yeshua's words—**He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned** (emphasis added). That is heavy.

I've taught on baptism so many times and have had so many discussions on baptism. One of the things that come back to me is this question, "Daniel, are you saying if I don't get baptized I'm not saved?" First of all, I'm not saying anything. I'm showing you what Scripture says. I'm showing you the urgency that is placed on baptism and I'm showing you the fact that it is commanded. So if you have the kind of

heart that says, "I know it is a command, but I'm not going to do it," good luck. I would not want to be in your shoes.

Then we have the popular go-to verse. People will ask, "What about the thief on the cross? He wasn't baptized." Yes, there are unique circumstances found in Scripture. The thief was having a deathbed confession; however, is that how we are to live our lives? Is that the precedent? Do we live like hell now, and when we are dying of cancer or have been in a car accident and are bleeding out, is it at that moment we are going to confess the LORD? Do you think you're in a state of salvation? That's crazy if that's your precedent. If the eunuch had got out of the chariot, fallen, and cracked his head open and died, do I do believe he was saved even though he would not have been baptized yet? Yes, I believe he was saved.

There is one thing I know as you go through Scripture, and this is one of the heaviest things laid out for us regarding the importance and the urgency of baptism. Only Satan would come and try to take that urgency and the importance of baptism and dumb it down to something that is, "Well, you know baptism is a good Christian thing to do, but it's not necessary." That is demonic. That is not what the Scripture says.

You don't need to believe me simply for the sake of believing me. I want to encourage you to go home and open up your Bible. I want to encourage you to study this topic yourself and see what it says.