

# Book of Hebrews Part 19: 6:1-2; Baptism: Jewish History, Mikvah, Baptism of Christ (1/26/2019)

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/bjdh5hs/book-of-hebrews-part-19>.

\*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've been looking at the elementary principles of the Messiah found in Hebrew 6:1-2—Therefore, leaving the discussion of the **elementary principles of Christ**, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of **repentance from dead works** and of **faith toward God**,<sup>2</sup> of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of **resurrection of the dead**, and of **eternal judgment** (emphasis added).

I highlighted the ones we have already discussed. We looked at repentance, faith, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. We are going to move on to our next elementary principle, and that is baptism.

Unfortunately, like all these other principles we've already gone through, this one is also highly controversial. It has stirred up a lot of debates within Christianity itself. Because of this, I'm not going to be able to just hit some high points. We are going to have to dig into this particular principle and go deep with it. When we are finished with this principle I want you to be able to really understand what baptism is and to be able to convey it to others so they can feel the weight of the topic.

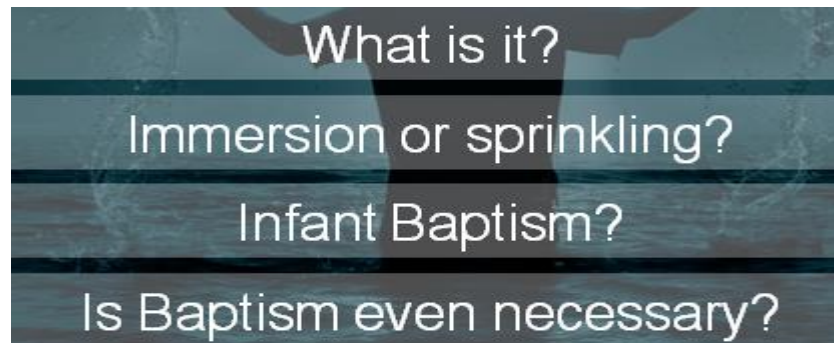
So we're going to be dealing with defining what baptism is from a biblical standpoint and not from man or our own understanding. We need to understand it according to the LORD. So we're going to be looking at what baptism is all the way from Genesis to Revelation, and we're also going to be dealing with some of the controversy about the topic.

Some of those controversies are: do we immerse, or do we sprinkle? Do we baptize infants? We are setting Catholicism aside for a second, and simply looking at Protestantism. Protestantism itself is not unified on the topic. On one side you find denominations such as The United Methodist, Lutheran's, and Presbyterians which practice sprinklings and baptize infants. On the other side we have denominations which will tell you that you don't do those things. They hold to the idea that baptism is supposed to be full immersion and they say you need to wait till someone can actually make the decision to walk with the LORD. So even Protestantism itself is not unified.

So these two sides of the coin, so to speak, are diametrically opposed to one another, and I am going to tell you they're not both right. Somebody's wrong. So we need to dig into this and see what it says in Scripture. What do we do with this? How are you supposed to understand this? What does the LORD want us to practice, and what needs to be our main concern?

We are also going to look at whether baptism is necessary for believers or not? This is huge because I'm going to tell you what I am coming across lately is that people appreciate baptism? They think it's a good thing and a wonderful expression of the faith, but you're not obligated to do it. People who hold to this proposition will tell you there's no command instructing that you have to do this. There's no necessity. There's no urgency. So these are a couple of the things we are going to discuss regarding this topic.

With that said, the first thing I want to mention today is the concept of baptism is literally woven throughout the tapestry of Scripture. It is not a New Testament phenomenon. You go to the Old Testament and find it riddled with various passages pertaining to baptism in various contexts. It's incredible! And as you go from one text to another, what happens is you peel back another layer of understanding regarding what baptism really is in the sight of God, what it means to Him, and how it affects the relationship between us and the Father



With that said, I want to begin by taking you to the Old Testament in order to build a foundation and understanding, a reverence and respect, for this institution before we ever even get into the New Testament. I will lead off with a little bit of Jewish tradition. The rabbi's teach baptism goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden. What they say is, when Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden, they immediately went into a state of repentance. Adam went and immersed in the Jordan River, and Eve went and immersed in the Tigris.

What is amazing to me is two things. Number one, the rabbi's take baptism all the way back to the very beginning. The second thing is they associate baptism with repentance; the two are directly correlated. That is something you are going to see as we dig into this. It is a biblical fact.

As we open up our Bibles, we get to look at the creation account. We read about Adam and Eve and almost immediately after that we're confronted with the greatest cataclysmic event the world has ever seen. What is that? It's the flood.

I want you to think about something because this is so important when it comes to baptism. God flooded the world. In other words, He baptized it; He immersed it. This is what He did. The question I want you to really understand regarding baptism and its purpose is why did God baptize the Earth? Why did he immerse it? The answer is sin? The world had become so wicked, so vile and violent, that it had to be purified. How did the LORD choose to purify the Earth? Baptism.

We can learn something from this; we can draw from this. When we're talking about baptism, we're talking about purification from sin. There's a cleansing process that is fascinating.

I want to just jump briefly to the New Testament because Peter makes this connection. The interesting thing about Peter is he comes at it from a different angle, and I want to share with you what he says.

1 Peter 3:20—...when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, **were saved through water** (emphasis added).

I want to point something out. Peter was very careful in his choice of words. He didn't say, "Saved from water." That's what you would expect him to say because God destroyed the Earth; therefore, you would expect him to say, "Saved from water." That's not what he says. In the Greek, the word through is *διά* (*dia*). It means just that, through water.

Now I'm going to tell you, when you start throwing salvation on the table you have my undivided attention. Now I know what we're talking about is life and death. Peter is throwing terms around like salvation, in that Noah was saved through baptism, through the water. This is amazing!

Peter goes on to say in 1 Peter 3:21—**There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God)** (emphasis added). In other words, Peter is saying we are not like the Gentiles, the Greeks, who take a bath and wash the dirt off. That is not what Peter is saying. Peter is referring to Yeshua's baptism in that we're going into His baptism. One of the things we discover in that verse is baptism is not simply a fleshly thing. It is spiritual, and if you don't get that component, you will never understand baptism. Baptism is totally a spiritual event.

Let's fast forward a moment. We're going to go back to the Torah and look at the time when God takes His people out of Egypt; He delivers them. He brings them to the foot of Mount Sinai for one purpose. He wants to enter into Covenant with them. This is why He has brought them there. We're going to enter into Covenant, but here's what's interesting. He has a requirement of them. They have to do something. There's one thing specifically mentioned, and I want to share that with you as we open up in Exodus 19:10—**Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes..."** (emphasis added). They have to wash their clothes.

You might say, "We wash clothes all the time. What's that mean?" You need to understand the nomenclature of Torah. When the Torah presents the washing clothes, it is saying baptism.

Let me give you an example so you can understand why it's so important to not take one passage out of Torah and say, "That is it." Torah is only meant to be read in its totality. This is how it is to be understood. Let me give you an example, a paraphrase, from Leviticus 11 where it says—**If a clean animal dies of its own, of natural causes, of torn by beast, and you eat of it** [and Torah kind of frowns upon this because even though it may be a clean animal you're not supposed to eat of it] **then you shall wash your clothes.** Leviticus 11 is very clear. What's interesting is when you go just a couple chapters later in Leviticus 17, we find the very exact same commandment—**If you eat an animal that is clean that has died of itself or was torn by beasts, you should wash your clothes, and you shall bathe in water.**

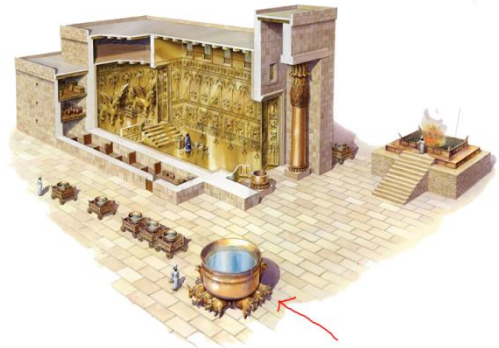
This is why I point this out. When Israel came to the foot of the mountain and they're told to wash their clothes, what's being implied is you need to wash your entire body. You're going to be prepared because you're going through a baptism, if you will. This is what's happening.

Now, this is significant because there's something about this event. Israel has come and drawn near to God to come into Covenant with Him. This is about Covenant, and before they entered into this Covenant, they enter into a Mikvah; they enter into a washing, into a baptism.

Do you want to understand Yeshua's baptism, the baptism we are baptized into? Understand that when we are baptized, we are being baptized into Covenant. We're becoming children of the New Covenant. It's the very same requirements the LORD set up at Sinai. It had the same requirements that exist today for the New Covenant. Absolutely amazing!

Let's jump ahead a little bit further to Exodus 30 and read about the Tabernacle. The LORD gives commands in regard to erecting a Tabernacle and the elements that belong in the Tabernacle. One of these elements is the laver. Let's read from Exodus 30:18-19—**18 You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze [Why?], for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, 19 for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it** (emphasis added).

So when Aaron and his sons went into the Temple area, they would go to the laver and would wash their hands and their feet. What did we learn a couple weeks ago? What is the beginning of a man? It is his hand. What is the end of a man? It is his feet. So we have from the hands to the feet; from beginning to the end of man. The priest was to wash his hands and feet every time he went in there.



Now the question is why? Why do the priests need to do this? Because they're drawing near to the LORD. Do you understand? This is a concept we need to get with baptism. When we draw near to the LORD, there is going to be something required. This was required of the priests. They would not have entered the Temple to draw near to the LORD unless they washed.

To prove this, look at the next verse in Exodus 30:20—**When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die** (emphasis added). Now you can't put more emphasis on this regulation of washing than what was stated here. If you come to draw near to Me, and you do not cleanse yourself, you're a dead man.

So what is amazing, especially as we get into the New Testament, the first thing on the mind of the priest as they are coming to draw near to God, one thing above all else, is, I have to wash.

This is the teaching of Torah. It puts urgency on this, and I want to be clear on something. It didn't stop with the priest. No! Anyone who would go up to the Temple, do you know what they did? They washed before they went up. This is what they did.

In fact, if you go to Israel today, you'll be hard-pressed, especially in the city of Jerusalem, to not run into a Mikvah. Here is a picture of an actual one in the archeological ruins of Jerusalem. It's a ritual pool for cleansing. These are all over the place in Israel. In fact, as of 2011, I believe over 850 of



them have been found in Israel. This is amazing!

To further put this in perspective, let me read you some commentary. [Mikva'ot were so widely dispersed and integral to Jewish life of the Second Temple Period that they have been found in every Jewish archaeological site in the land of Israel and are located in the homes of people from every social class.](#) (LBD, Zissu and Amit, "Common Judaism," 49)

What you need to understand is they made it readily available because you as a person, man and woman, you don't go into the temple without being cleansed. You don't draw near to a Holy God, a righteous God, without preparing. This is what you do. So these mikva'ot were everywhere. They are even finding them on main highways going into Jerusalem because the pilgrims coming in for the festivals would need to cleanse themselves. They were not going to show up for a Passover without being purified. This is the reality and we learn so much from this now.

Let me take this a step further by showing you the Hebrew definitions of Mikvah. Mikvah, or מִקְוֵה in Hebrew means - a collection, i.e. (of water) a reservoir. This is why they call it a Mikvah. There is another name, another definition, for this very same Hebrew word. It means-hope, מִקְוֵה, and I want to show you—it is hope.

Think about it. So you coming into the waters of a Mikvah, demonstrates you're coming into the waters of hope. Therefore, when you come into the waters of the baptism of Yeshua, you are coming into the waters of hope.

You see, we were once outside; we were separated from God. We had a problem. Sin was the problem, but God has created the solution. He has created the waters of hope and that's why this was an integral part of Jewish life. It was indigenous; it was just the way of life. They longed to go in there. Why? Because they wanted to be joined with God, and they revered God as Holy. This is something we in our western culture have no concept of. We don't understand Holiness at all. Absolutely no understanding.

So we have got to get back to our Jewish roots and understanding the definition of a Mikvah and the purpose of this Mikvah, of baptism. I want you to understand, for Jewish people, it's never been a symbolic gesture. It's not symbolic. It's a spiritual reality. It's completely spiritual in their mind.

Let me show you how the Orthodox Jews define this term. This is fascinating. They define it this way—["Mikvah" - a ritual pool of water, used for the purpose of attaining ritual purity.](#) I want to stop right there. When I used to read these terms, ritual and purity, it sounded like legalism to me. It just drips of legalism. It was just senseless nonsense people did just because they're a bunch of sinful, hateful people. However, you need to understand, it is spiritual. This is not worldly; it has a concept of holiness and righteousness to it.

So starting the commentary from the beginning—["Mikvah" - a ritual pool of water, used for the purpose of attaining ritual purity. Immersion in a Mikvah is performed for the following main purposes:](#) [They give two main purposes. You want to pay close attention to what we're about to read. The first one is] [a.\)It is used in connection with Repentance, to remove the impurity of sin.](#) This is amazing. The heart of repentance leads you to the waters of hope. That's what happens. And for what purpose? To remove sin. This is not for show. This is not some, you know, meaningless outward expression of your faith.

This is entirely spiritual.

Look at the second thing we read here—b.) It is also used in connection with **Conversion** (emphasis added). Think about this in the context of the baptism of Yeshua. Why is anyone going to get baptized in Yeshua? It is for the purpose of converting; they want to become disciples of Yeshua, to become followers of Him, and to come into the faith. That's what it is for. Listen to what happens as we go on—**because the convert has taken upon himself or herself to adopt the lifestyle of the Jew that is based on the recognition of G-d as King of the Universe and on the obligation to perform the commandments of the Torah** (emphasis added, Orthodox Union, *Mikvah* ).

So conversion is specifically affiliated with baptism, with going through the Mikvah. However, it's all under the guidance and understanding of two things. These two things: **recognition of G-d as King of the Universe**. We must confess Him as LORD of Heaven and Earth. The other thing is now that you are being immersed into this commitment; you are going to walk in—the **commandments of the Torah**. This is what Paul said— **I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me** (Galatians 2:20).

This is the reality. This is what's being asked of us. We are to keep the Torah. These are the things.

**recognition of G-d as King of the Universe and on the obligation to perform the commandments of the Torah.**

Now, this is interesting because we keep running into this in this particular series. What is it? It is the structure of the faith. These are

the very things that define the elect in the Book of Revelation. As we look in Revelation 14:12, it says— **Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus** (emphasis added). These are the very things that are tied with conversion. It is absolutely amazing when you look at this.

Now there is something I want to mention. Before Yeshua ever came on the scene; before there was a gospel of Yeshua going forth here, if you wanted to convert to the faith as it is being presented here through the Orthodox perspective and the history of the Jewish people, Mikvah was never presented as an option. It was never presented as, “Hey, if you'd like, you should really go through a Mikvah.” You would never hear, “You definitely have to be circumcised according to the Scripture, but you know, as far as the washing, well, it's a good thing to do but don't worry about it.” I'm making a point. You cannot go anywhere in the history of the Jewish people with that mindset. That is the mindset we see has crept into Christianity today.

In fact, let me show you how strongly they believed in this. I'm going to take you back to the Babylonian Talmud. **The Sages, however, said, 'Whether he [the Convert] had performed ritual ablution [in other words, a Mikvah] but had not been circumcised or whether he had been circumcised but had not performed the prescribed ritual ablution, he is not a proper proselyte, unless he has been circumcised and has also performed the prescribed ritual ablution** (emphasis added, Babylonian Talmud, Yeb 46a). What they're saying is you can get circumcised, but if you do not go through this baptism, you are not a convert. You're not one of us. You're not in the faith.

Could you possibly put any more emphasis on this baptism? No, you could not! And this is explicitly in the context of conversion. We need to feel the weight of this.

Let me take it a step further and show you a modern-day Jewish commentary from the Jewish encyclopedia. This is what we read—**To receive the spirit of God, or to be permitted to stand in the presence of God, man must undergo Baptism** (emphasis added). Now what's really going to blow your mind is you're going to see that is the expectation in the New Testament. That is the total Jewish mindset. You will go through this evolution. You will go through this baptism, and you can expect the Holy Spirit is going to come. This is amazing! And this is Jewish commentary. How amazing is this?

Let me take you back to Numbers 19 in the Torah. The chapter is all dedicated to what is known as the red heifer. It was a really interesting and unique sacrifice because the heifer would all be burnt. Its head, its hide, and its blood included. Nothing was removed. The entire thing was burned, and it was burned outside the camp. It was burned for a very specific purpose. I want to read to you what that purpose is. Numbers 19:9—**Then a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store them outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification; it is for purifying** [From what?] **from sin** (emphasis added).

This is an amazing passage because here we see a baptism-like situation where the LORD is cleansing with water and it's being attributed to cleansing from sin.

Now Numbers 19 is a unique situation. The reason the red heifer is killed was if you touched a dead body, a grave or a bone, you have been exposed to death. Paul tells us—**the wages of sin is death**. You are exposed to sin in its complete form. You become unclean. It's an abomination to God. It was never God's design for His people to experience this, so He provides a way for purification so you can go to these waters of hope to cleanse the sin from you so you can be in His presence.

There is one other thing I want to mention before we move on to help us with understanding these waters of purification. They show themselves as a foreshadow, of the baptism of the Messiah Yeshua. This particular baptism, if you will, was mixed with a sacrifice. That heifer had to give its life, and its ashes were literally mixed with the water of purification, and that purified you. I want you to think about Yeshua and His baptism and what that really means. It is a picture to picture. It is incredible because we're mixing water with the sacrifice. This is what we're going to see as we move forward.

Moving on to Numbers 19:19—**The clean person shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself** (emphasis added). In other words, he is making a cognitive decision to move forward and participate in this. It's his decision. He shall purify himself. What does he do? **He shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water** [There's a Mikvah. There's a baptism. He's being immersed]; **and at evening he shall be clean** (emphasis added, Numbers 19:19).

Do you want to know how important it was to do this? We continue in Numbers 19:20—**But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD. The water of purification has not been sprinkled on him; he is unclean** (emphasis added). This is similar to the instructions given the priest regarding washing; if you don't wash, you die. You are cut off.

I want you to realize this is baptism, as we look at all the variations thereof in the Torah, and in the Old Testament, is not simply presented as something wonderful to do and a great expression of your faith. No, no! It is way more than that. It's completely spiritual in nature; therefore it is imperative to do because it is the will of God. It's what He called us to do.

So as we look at all these stories, I want you to take away the beauty, the power, and the meaning of baptism and its importance. What we're going to do is we're going to take this into the New Testament. I'm going to take you to Matthew 3:1-2—<sup>1</sup>In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup> and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

Now, I have a reason for beginning with John's baptism first, instead of Yeshua's baptism. The reason is I've had so many people over the years ask me this question, "What about John's baptism? Is that a different baptism, or is that the same baptism? What do you do with this?" So we're going to dig into it.

In Matthew 3:1-2, we see John's ministry was repentance. This is very important to note. Moving on to Matthew 3:5-6—<sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him <sup>6</sup> and were baptized by him in the Jordan, [And what were they doing?] **confessing their sins** (emphasis added).

So the entire ministry of John the Baptist was repent, repent. That's it. And what did he do? He brought them into Mikvah. He brought them into baptism. That's why he's called John the Baptist. His entire ministry is bent on that, and here again we see repentance coinciding with Mikvah, coinciding with baptism.

Then we continue and get to what I really want to get to in Matthew 3:11—I indeed baptize you with **water unto repentance** (emphasis added). He makes it very clear what he is doing, but then he goes on and says this—but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you **with the Holy Spirit and fire** (emphasis added).

Now you need to recognize John himself made a very clear distinction between his baptism and Yeshua's baptism. Yeshua's baptism is superior in every way. These waters of hope are waters of promise. Look at the promises that were made by the prophets such as Joel—I will pour out my spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28), and where Jeremiah says—<sup>31</sup> Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— <sup>32</sup> not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My Covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD (Jeremiah 31:31-32). No. No! This is the baptism into the New Covenant. This is a baptism of Holy Spirit and fire. It is superior in every way.

So you could collect all these things from the Torah, the prophets, and from the Old Testament, and you could bring that to John's baptism. You can feel the necessity and the weight just in his baptism. But how much more in Yeshua's, knowing what's to come? Knowing this is a baptism of power?

With that said, I want to give you a living example of this distinction. Going to Acts 19:1-2 we read this—<sup>1</sup> And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples <sup>2</sup> he said to them, "**Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?**" (Emphasis added).

I want you to understand something; this is his expectation for people who believe. Paul's expectation is you are to receive the power of God, the Holy Spirit. Continuing in Acts 19:2-3—<sup>2</sup> so they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."<sup>3</sup> And he said to them, "**Into what then were you baptized?**" (Emphasis added).

Did you catch that? He just tied baptism in with the faith. In other words, Paul is asking them, "You are in the faith; why then don't you have the Holy Spirit?" They respond—**So they said, "Into John's baptism."** Paul is tying this together. He is tying the Holy Spirit and this type of baptism. When I look at this, I'm in awe. Paul is basically inquiring, "Did you receive the Spirit?" He doesn't understand and wants to know what baptism they were baptized with. They answer—**Into John's baptism.**

Now it makes sense. The distinction was made by John himself. He said Yeshua was going to baptize with the Holy Spirit. They didn't have the Holy Spirit because they weren't baptized in the right baptism. Think about how much emphasis we need to put on the right baptism. We need to be baptized in Yeshua.

We continue on in Acts 19:4-5—<sup>4</sup> Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.<sup>5</sup> When they heard this, **they were baptized in the name of the LORD Jesus** (emphasis added).

Here's what's interesting. They were re-baptized. They were re-baptized because they had not participated in the baptism into the New Covenant; into the power.

Continuing in Acts 19:6—**And when Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.** Do you remember what we're talking about as we looked at this expectation of the sages in the Jewish encyclopedia? To receive the Spirit of God, to stand in the presence of God, what do you need? You need to go through this baptism. You need to go through Mikvah, and you literally see an example of it in Acts 19. These believers went through this baptism of Yeshua, they confessed Yeshua, and immediately power came down.

Now is it always like that even in the New Testament where we see this manifestation of prophecy and of gift of tongues? It is not. I mean, that's at the LORD's discretion, but there is Holy Spirit given, and so this is very important.

Now going to Ephesians 4:4, I want to tie it in with this—**There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; <sup>5</sup> one LORD, one faith, one baptism** (emphasis added). There's only one baptism, and Paul is referring to the Messiah Yeshua. There's only one baptism that leads you to the New Covenant. There's only one baptism that leads you to be anointed with the power from on High.

Now digging into this deeper to understand what this baptism is. I want to take you to Romans 6:1-3. This is what we read—**What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> Certainly not! How then shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? <sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?** (emphasis added).

This is an eye opener in the sense of us going to proclaim the gospel and that you need to be baptized. What do you explain to them? What is this baptism about? What is the significance? What does it mean for me to go into the water?

When you actually go in and are immersed, you're going into the grave, and you are literally emulating the death of the Messiah. You are testifying to the truth of whom He is and that He paid the price for our sins.

It is, however, not just that. Paul goes on in Acts 6:4—**Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life** (emphasis added).

So when we go down into the water, we are buried with Him in death, and we're mindful of the price He paid and the sacrifice He made for us. Because of that, we can have confidence knowing we are in the waters of hope that when we arise out of that water we are a new creation— **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new** (2 Corinthians 5:17).

That is the spiritual reality that the immersed needs to have before they enter into the waters. They have to understand what is going on. They have to understand this is spiritual. This is not fleshly. None of this is fleshly. Do not look at this thing with your eyes. You're looking at it through your heart and through faith in Yeshua. You look at this as when you go down into the water and you come up you will never again walk with the Devil again. The chains are to be broken. They are to be broken through Yeshua's sacrifice and the power of the Resurrection. We are no longer to be slaves of sin; instead, we are to be slaves of righteousness. Clinging to His Torah. This is what we are called to do.

I have to tell you my personal experiences. When you are in ministry, you experience a lot of intense things. I've had Satanists come and meet me and tell me they have been looking for me. I've had a lot of intense moments in ministry where I have had confrontations with demons. On the positive, I have experienced the joy and power of Passover. I have experienced the joy of Sukkot. However, none of these experiences compare to the intensity that I have felt with baptism.

There's no other way I can say this. I'm not glamorizing this, and I'm not trying to make it sound powerful. I'm telling you my testimony. I've never experienced anything this intense in my life. It's unbelievable! I was baptizing people long before Corner Fringe came into existence, and I had no appreciation for what I was getting into, and what was taking place. Oh, but I learned. Then you realize you are on the front lines of war because of what you're doing.

You see, the moment these people go into the water because they have faith and have made that confession, they follow God's commandment to go into His death and resurrection, it awakens the kingdom of the Devil. He absolutely freaks out. There's something so powerful about this, and I can tell you just being a part of it shakes the gates of hell. It is that intense.

So now when I am doing a baptism, guess what? I fast. It's not a joke. I do not mess around. I am in such prayer and meditation during that time knowing I'm going up against principalities and powers. This is not to be trifled with; this is serious business.

A couple of years ago I came across a passage in the Didache. The Didache is one of the oldest, Christian manuscripts, or some would say Jewish-Christian manuscripts, in existence. It dates back to late first or early second century. It is a precious document of antiquity for us to understand the minds of Christians. Some scholars believe it was actually written by a Jewish-Christian or Messianic Jew simply because of some of the verbiage. I personally don't ascribe to that, but be that as it may, this is an incredible piece of antiquity, especially for the faith.

There are interesting statements found in this document I want to share with you so you can feel the weight of this topic and know I am telling you the truth. In regard to baptism, the Didache comments on this—**And before the baptism, let the one baptizing and the one who is to be baptized fast, as well as any others who are able. Also, you must instruct the one who is to be baptized to fast for one or two days beforehand.**

That commentary floored me, especially since I was already doing this. It told me the people who wrote this knew they were at war. There was a reason why John the Baptist didn't cloth himself in soft garments and eat lavishly; instead, he lived on locusts and honey. His entire ministry was dedicated to baptizing people in order to bringing them out of the gates of hell into the waters of hope.

So again, how powerful is this? These people know they're at war. I was stunned. I was like, "My goodness. How real is this?"

So fasting is the key. We'll be talking about that at some point in the future. It is a pretty important teaching for us living in these days.

I want to take you to Matthew 28:18-19—**And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit** (emphasis added).

The first thing I want to mention is a question. Is there any wiggle room in this at all regarding portraying baptism as anything else other than a command? This is not a suggestion. The one thing Yeshua mentions when He commands His disciples to go out and make disciples is they are to baptize them. They are to immerse them. Could you put more emphasis on this? You could not possibly do it.

How is it this is not at the top of the list anymore? How is it we've reduced baptism to simply being a good expression of the faith instead of creating such urgency that people are asking you to please baptize them? If they are not telling you they need to be baptized, you are not explaining it right. Something is wrong.

The other thing I want to mention about this passage is that this passage is being attacked today. It is hotly debated. I get email questions about this passage that are mind-blowing to me, and it is all thanks to that wonderful internet that produces so much truth. I mean, you can believe everything that's on it. Right? No!

There is a concept going around attacking the formula, as they call it. The formula being you are to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There are anti-Trinitarians from various groups passing along information that the statement—**in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**—was an added text. They claim that statement can't be found in the earliest manuscripts. I will tell you, that is a lie from the pit of Hell; it's ridiculous. The oldest manuscripts all

contain this formula; every single one of them. In fact, I know of no ancient manuscripts today that do not contain it; not one.

Let me take it a step further by taking you back to the Didache, and I want you to remember that this document is from the late first century or early second century. This is what the Didache says in 7:1-2—**Now concerning baptism, baptize as follows: after you have reviewed all these things, baptize “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” in running water.** <sup>2</sup> But if you have no running water, then baptize in some other water; and if you are not able to baptize in cold water, then do so in warm (emphasis added).

My point of showing you this is we have this early second-century document said to be, by many, written by a Messianic Jew, and here we find the formula for baptizing. This document is in addition to all the old manuscripts we have of Scripture including Matthew.

I'm going to take it a step further. Tertullian, from the second century, says—**Thus, too, does the angel, the witness of baptism, “make the paths straight” for the Holy Spirit, who is about to come upon us, by the washing away of sins, which faith, sealed in (the name of) the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit** (emphasis added, Tertullian, Pt III On Baptism).

So here you find outside of the earliest Bible manuscripts external sources that carry exactly what Yeshua commanded His disciples. So when we look at what they call the Trinitarian formula, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, it's legitimate. This is not a point of contention. We need to kill ideology because it's absurd.

There is a second question I want to point out. Were the early believers dogmatic in the sense of I have this formula that they believed if you did not say, “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” none of this is going to mean anything? Again, I've talked to people who have told me, “I wasn't baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; therefore, they believe their baptism isn't legitimate.

To that I say, “Hold on! Time out!” I want to make something very clear, if you have ever witnessed a baptism I have performed, you will notice I simply baptized in the name of Yeshua. Does that qualify for the whole Trinitarian formula? Absolutely!

Let me take you to Acts 19:5—**When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the LORD Jesus** (emphasis added). This verse is about when Paul was finding these people who had been baptized by John the Baptist, and they needed to be re-baptized. How did Paul baptize them? He baptized them in the name of Yeshua. Do you remember what John said in his little epistle? **Whoever has the Son has the Father** (1 John 2:23). It's that confession.

Let me take it a step further by going to Acts 2:36-38 where we find Peter speaking after the Shavuot event of the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples. The people are freaked out. <sup>36</sup> **Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both LORD and Christ.** <sup>37</sup> Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” <sup>38</sup> 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** (emphasis added). Peter baptized in the name of Yeshua.

So my point is, if someone had said to you “In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” that's fine. That's recognizing the Godhead, and it is perfect totality. There's nothing wrong with that, or if they just said, “You're baptized in the name of Yeshua”, you're not missing anything.