

The WildBranch Ministry *...thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Romans 11:18*

Baptism

Part 6

I pray that I have reasonably established that God delivers us from the inside out, that He starts with the heart, changes our mind, and then our bodies respond. This spiritual reality is seen in the design of nature as well. All living things are produced and reproduced by a seed, and that seed is planted first in the 'heart' of all living things. So it is with God's children.

There are many 'baptisms' in the Tanakh (Ivrim 6:1-2). The Hebrew uses several words to employ the idea of being immersed, washed, cleansed or purified with or in water. Four of the more common words associated with water are *rachats*, *kavas*, *tahar*, and *chata'*. *Rachats* means to thoroughly wash, *kavas* means to wash by compressing, *tahar* means to free from foreign matter, and *chata'* means to remove from sin. You may notice that this word is the root of the word for sin and sin offering. Used in this form it speaks of removing **from** sin.

Vayikra 14:52

*And he shall **cleanse** the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the living bird, and with the cedar wood, and with the hyssop, and with the scarlet:*

Sh'mot 29:36

*"And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement: **and thou shalt cleanse** the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it."*

In order to properly understand the spiritual application we must discern the natural application first. The context will generally reveal whether we are talking about the washing of the flesh with water or the washing or cleansing of the heart or mind. I believe this is imperative to discern in all of scripture. In other

words, we must not read 'water' into every occurrence of washing, cleansing, purifying or baptizing. Here are a few examples of where the text clearly indicates cleansing or washing the flesh with water.

Sh'mot 29:4

*"And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash (**rachats**) them with water."*

Sh'mot 30:20

*"When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash (**rachats**) with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto YHVH:"*

Vayikra 15:8

*"And if he that hath the issue spit upon him that is clean; (**tahar**) then he shall wash (**kavas**) his clothes, and bathe (**rachats**) himself in water, and be unclean until the even."*

There are occasions when water is associated with cleansing or washing and the context still reveals an internal cleansing that only YHVH can perform. Y'shua seems to appeal to this truth as well with respect to the forgiveness of sins.

Yechezk'el 36:25

*"Then will I sprinkle clean (**tahar**) water upon you, and ye shall be clean:(**tahar**) from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse (**tahar**) you."*

Luke 5:20-24

*"And when He saw their faith, He said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can **forgive sins, but God alone?** But when Y'shua perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to **forgive sins**, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house."*

We must discern the difference between cleansing the heart and cleansing our walk with YHVH.

Sh'mot 30:18-19

"Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat:"

Mizmor 26:6

"I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O YHVH:"

Mizmor 51:7

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Yochanan 13:6-10

"Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Y'shua answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Y'shua answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Adonay not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Y'shua saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all."

When man is reconciled to YHVH, he is cleansed in his heart first as revealed in the construction of the tabernacle. When we, as sons of the living God, approach God we are to wash first. When the tabernacle or temple stood, it was a physical object that required one to enter by being physically cleansed. But this cleansing was also produced as a result of an obedient HEART first. One washes their flesh because their mind sent them the proper electrical signals. The information that the mind sends to the body must come from either the spirit of man or the Spirit of God (1Corinthians 2:10-12). But our obedience comes from the heart first. Whatever is in your heart will determine what you believe, and what you believe will determine how you behave. The cleansing of the heart, which only YHVH can do, leads to obedience and obedience tells us that we are to be immersed in water. In order to cleanse the heart, the old man

of sin must die, and this is why baptism is a picture of death, which we will address soon. The bottom line is that the washing of the flesh is always preceded by the desire to wash the flesh. Water baptism DOES NOT precede salvation, for salvation is a matter of the heart.

I have, for the most part, stayed away from this issue in the New Testament. I have wanted to lay down a foundation of the use of words in the Tanakh. These words must be placed back into their proper context. Regardless of what a particular word means, it must be harmonious to the overall subject and context in which it is placed. I pray I have established the following:

1. The word baptism in Hebrew is directly related to hope and gathering.
2. That it prophetically speaks of the reuniting of the whole house of Israel.
3. That the spiritual application is revealed in the natural.
4. That God ALWAYS cleanses the heart first, then the flesh.
5. That we must discern the difference between God's cleansing of the heart and our approach to the throne of God as His children.
6. And that we cannot immediately place water into the context of baptism, washing, cleansing and purifying.

Next time I am going to begin addressing the controversial occurrences of this word in the New Testament. Once again I believe that the revelation of what baptism is all about is found in the beginning.

Shalom Alecheim!

©1993–2020 The WildBranch Ministry. | P.O. Box 97, Vernal, UT, 84078 | 1-435-789-3713 | WildBranch.org