

The WildBranch Ministry

...thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Romans 11:18

Baptism

Part 7

The scriptures teach that there is only one Torah for the homeborn and the stranger (Sh'mot 12:49, Vayikra 24:22). The Hebrew word for homeborn is 'ezirach. Planted in the heart of this word is the Hebrew word for seed, zera'. This is because there is only one good seed from the very beginning. And that seed, according to the law of like kind, always reproduces after itself, or should I say Himself. This is a very simple teaching. God's commandments and instructions are always the same for all His people, whether they were born in the land, or were grafted in among those born in the land. This principle is given in the first chapter of B'reshiyt, because it is designed to be the basis for all of the teaching of the rest of scripture. In other words, when reading and studying the New Testament, we must keep these fundamental principles in mind that were revealed in the beginning. These truths are given in the beginning because God loves the whole world, and those whom He has called are ALL ordained from the beginning. The New Testament writers wrote nothing new, they simply wrote what was true.

This fundamental fact is none the less true with baptism. Baptism was and is nothing 'new' to the Hebrew people or the writers and prophets of the Tanakh. If this truth is more difficult to see in the Tanakh, Paul brought this truth forth in his letters.

1Corinthians 10:1-4

*"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all **baptized** unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Messiah."*

Do you know why all the 'mixed multitude' ate the same spiritual meat and drank the same spiritual drink? Because there is only one good seed!! This passage is a clear reference to the 'one' baptism that Paul will mention later to the Ephesians. When YHVH does the immersing, it is done to the heart, for the heart (the source of obedience) must be cleansed first. This is the pattern repeated for us in the Torah when our loving Father teaches us how to deal with disease.

Vayikra 15:5-13

"And whosoever toucheth his bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And he that sitteth on any thing whereon he sat that hath the issue shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And he that toucheth the flesh of him that hath the issue shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And if he that hath the issue spit upon him that is clean; then he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And what saddle soever he rideth upon that hath the issue shall be unclean. And whosoever toucheth any thing that was under him shall be unclean until the even: and he that beareth any of those things shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And whomsoever he toucheth that hath the issue, and hath not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And the vessel of earth, that he toucheth which hath the issue, shall be broken: and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water. And when he that hath an issue is cleansed of his issue; then he shall number to himself seven days for his cleansing, and wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running water, and shall be clean."

Every instruction there follows a willing heart. One who does not regard His Father will not wash himself or herself. Our Father is giving instructions here for His children. Their obedience to wash themselves begins first in the heart. These passages begin with, 'speak unto the children of Israel' (Vayikra 15:1-2). YHVH has already cleansed their hearts. This pattern was repeated with Y'shua and His disciples in Yochanan 13:1-11.

Now here is where I begin to depart with much Rabbinic teaching on this subject. Though we may not understand all of it yet, I believe that the washing of the flesh with water was NOT a ceremonial washing. I do not worship a God of pomp and ritual. I believe that the cause of much of our common and deadly diseases today are a result of our lack of desire, or just old fashioned disobedience, to these commands. Most Rabbinical commentators teach that these ordinances were given to distinguish Israel from the rest of the nations. This is no doubt true, but they go on to comment that the waters did not actually cleanse the flesh. While recognizing the 'spiritual' picture, they still ignore God's desire to preserve us holy, spirit, soul AND body. The following is a typical example.

Living Judaism by Rabbi Wayne Dosick:

"The Torah enjoins that in order to reenter a state of ritual purity, to be eligible to participate in the ritual rites, a person is to bathe--to immerse in natural, flowing water as a symbolic act of purification (Leviticus 14:8, 15:5, 22:6 and Deuteronomy 23:22) The act of immersion is called tevilah. The waters are not used to remove any physical uncleanness, but rather serve as a symbolic rebirth, an emergence from the purified, cleansing waters of new beginnings."

Does that not sound like part of a good Baptist sermon? Although the 'spiritual' is the greater eternal reality, the natural is designed to consistently teach us the spiritual, but works in a symbiotic relationship with the spiritual. When faithful to the natural we see the spiritual. When grasping the spiritual, we now can see how the commandments concerning our bodies and behavior is revealed in the spiritual. Did that make sense? Perhaps this is part of what Y'shua was referring to in what we erroneously called the Lord's prayer.

Mattityahu 6:9-10

'After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth (the natural) as it is in heaven (the spiritual).'

I believe the patterns for this reality have been revealed from the beginning. God's desire is to cleanse our hearts, knowing that this is where obedience begins. In showing us this eternal reality, He gives us a natural picture in the

beginning with the immersion of the creation and it's coming out of the waters. This is why I believe it is so imperative to learn the scriptures from the beginning.

As you may have noticed, I did took a side trip here before tackling this issue in the New Testament. I felt it was necessary background. Next time we will address the baptism of Yochanan the immerser.

Shalom Alecheim!

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