

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

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## The Baptism of Repentance Part 8

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In the Tanakh we read several prophecies of one who is to prepare the way for YHVH. Yesha'yahu first tells us this one.

Yesha'yahu 40:3

*"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of YHVH, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."*

A very provocative statement indeed. There are a few introductory remarks about some of the Hebrew in this text that I would like to address first. The word translated as 'prepare' here is not the most common Hebrew word for this action. The Hebrew word *kun* is primarily used to express the idea of preparation or making ready for something. The word in our text is *panu*. This word means to turn toward something or to turn your face back to someone. As a matter of fact, the etymological root of this word is the Hebrew word for face or countenance (*panah*). There is a specific prophetic reason why this word is used instead of the common word for preparation. The reason is that the ministry of Yochanan the immerser (John the Baptist) and Eliyahu (Elijah) are the ones being referred to here. This verse is quite provocative because the word for 'straight' here is *yashar*, which is a cognate (family word) of Y'shua.

Now it gets more interesting in the word for 'desert'. We are told that the Messiah was to come as lightning out of the east to the west (Mattityahu 24:27). The west is where the scattered sheep of the house of Israel are to be found. This is where the multitudes are found. All the words in context with those in the west and the multitudes are associated with the words for mixing and scattering. One of these words is the word translated as 'Arab' in the Tanakh. This word means to mix or to mingle, which was the result of the house of Israel being scattered and mixed with the nations (Hosea 7:8). It comes from the root

'*arav* which first appears as the word 'evening' in B'reshiyt 1:5. This is because the evening is a mixture of light and darkness. It is a word that represents the direction that God's people will go, and the word used in Aramaic to describe the feet and toes of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2:41-43. The word translated as desert in our text is '*arabah*', referring to the people who lived there. In Sh'mot 12:38 it is the word used to describe the 'mixed multitude' that came out of Egypt in the Exodus. None the less, there is an interesting combination of words used here that provide the background for the ministry of Yochanan. Not the least of which is the testimony for WHOM Yochanan the immerser is preparing the way.

In all four gospels we are given details of the ministry of John the baptizer. We are informed that Yochanan's baptism was the baptism of repentance in Mattityahu 3:11, Mark 1:4, Luke 3:8, and Yochanan 1:26. In Mark's gospel we are told that Yochanan's baptism was for the 'remission of sins'. As I discussed in our last teaching, when one agrees to come to the *mikveh*, this tells me that God has already done a work in their heart, and coming to the *mikveh*, i.e. obedience, is the fruit of that faith. We are informed in the gospels and in the book of Romans that the good news came first to the Jew, then to the Greek. I believe that Yochanan's primary audience was Jewish, including Pharisees and Sadducees (Mattityahu3:7). His baptism was the baptism of repentance. In the Hebrew, the act of repentance is employed in the word *shuv*. This word means to turn back to where you came from, and first appears in B'reshiyt 3:19 when YHVH tells Adam that he will return (*shuv*) to the dust of the ground from where he was taken. This concept was seen in the word for 'prepare' in Yesha'yahu 40:3 that we discussed earlier.

It was not the gentiles who needed to repent. The gentiles first had to **believe** before they could repent. This was directed toward His own, the house of Judah, particularly the Pharisees and Sadducees, for they had turned away from the Torah and taught others to do so as well. "REPENT! For the kingdom of God is at hand" cried both Yochanan and Y'shua. How had they turned away from God? By turning away from the Torah or the Word, which is God. Yochanan's immersion into the living Jordan River was after they had turned their hearts toward God and repented. Water does not cause repentance.

Repentance comes from the heart. It is also the fulfilling of righteousness that Yochanan was the witness of this cleansing, for Yochanan was a priest. It was the priests who 'inspected' the cleanness or continued uncleanness of an individual. Yochanan's baptism was a picture of repentance, which only prepares the way for YHVH. This preparation is also seen in the Exodus from Egypt. Before the Passover (the lamb), Pharaoh had to 'let go' of the people. He had to turn them loose so they could begin the journey back to the land that Abraham had crossed over to as well. The baptism of repentance was for the turning of a straying heart of His own back to the Torah. Y'shua tells us that HE is in the Torah.

Yochanan 5:39

*"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."*

Luke 24:44

*"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."*

When His own people hear of the Messiah, they have already had their hearts prepared for such a revelation by Yochanan's baptism of repentance. Trusting God and obeying Him is the fruit of repentance. If the Jewish leaders of the time were really seeking God and following His Torah, then they would have seen and received the Messiah. They were not following the Torah and so did not bear the fruit of the Torah and welcome the prophesied Messiah of the Torah.

Mattityahu 3:7-8

*"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore **fruits** meet for **repentance**:"*

We know from the record of the New Testament, that a large majority of His own were not immersed by Yochanan. However, many of the disciples of Yochanan were prepared and readily accepted the Master later on.

Acts 19:1-6

*"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Messiah Y'shua. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of Adonai Y'shua. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."*

Next time we will discuss Y'shua's baptism. Did Y'shua need to repent?

Shalom Alecheim!

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