

# BAPTISM INTO MESSIAH

Lesson Six; Romans 6

## Immersion

*Tevillah ba'Mikvah*

“Baptism”

A ritual purity ceremony

A conversion ceremony

*When he comes up after his immersion, he is deemed an Israelite in all respects. (b.Yevamot 47b)*

*Rabbi Yose said, “One who has become a proselyte is like a child newly born.” (b.Yevamot 48b)*

Emerging from the Mikvah is very much like a process of rebirth. Seen in this light, we see that the Mikvah represents the womb. When an individual enters the Mikvah, he is reentering the womb, and when he emerges, he is as if born anew. Thus he attains a completely new status . . . When a person immerses in the Mikvah, he is placing himself in the state of the world yet unborn, subjecting himself totally to God's creative power.

When a person immerses himself in water, he places himself in an environment where he cannot live. Were he to remain submerged for more than a few moments, he would die from lack of air. He is thus literally placing himself in a state of non-existence and non-life. Breath is the very essence of life, and, according to the Torah, a person who stops breathing is no longer considered among the living. Thus, when a person submerges himself in a Mikvah, he momentarily enters the realm of the nonliving, so that when he emerges, he is like one reborn.

To some degree, this explains why a Mikvah cannot be made in a vessel or tub, but must be built directly in the ground, for in a sense, the Mikvah also represents the grave. When a person immerses, he is temporarily in a state of death, and when he emerges, he is resurrected with a new status.

We therefore see that immersion in the Mikvah represents renewal and rebirth.” (Aryeh Kaplan, *Waters of Eden*)<sup>1</sup>

## Sin that Grace May Increase

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

<sup>2</sup> May it never be! How shall we who [*spiritually*] died to sin still live in it?

<sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been [*spiritually*] buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

## No Longer Slaves to Sin

<sup>5</sup> For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death [*through baptism*], certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

<sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

<sup>7</sup> for he who has died is freed from [*the control of*] sin.

## Hope of the Resurrection

<sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

<sup>9</sup> knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

## Dead to Sin

<sup>10</sup> For the death that He died, He died to [*the influence of*] sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

<sup>11</sup> Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,

<sup>13</sup> and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those [*resurrected*] alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

## Not Under the Law

<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law [*?*] but under grace.

<sup>15</sup> What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!

<sup>1</sup> Kaplan, 1995, pp 320-323.