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The Significance of the Messianic Mikveh

6: 3b-7

The significance of the Messianic mikveh DIG: When did the first Messianic mikveh take place? The idea of death is mentioned fifteen times in Chapter 6. How does Messiah's death and resurrection tie into our relationship with sin? When we stumble, what do we do when we find ourselves listening to the [sin nature] once again? How have we been cleared from sin?

REFLECT: How does God want our bodies? How might knowing this, change how you live your life? What does it mean to practice the teachings of these verses? What do you do when you hear voices from your former life? What specifically will you do this week to count yourself dead to sin but alive in Messiah? If you could bury one thing, what would it be?

We were immersed into Messiah's death and resurrection, and because He was raised from the dead, likewise, we also will be raised to newness of life.



Shortly after the **resurrection** of **Yeshua**, mention is made of what might be called the first "**Messianic mikveh.**" On the day of **Shavu'ot** (Pentecost), thousands of Jewish people from all over the world had gathered to celebrate the feast. After the outpouring of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** on the righteous of the TaNaKh (see the commentary on **Acts, to see link click Al - The Ruach ha-Kodesh Comes at Shavu'ot**), **Peter** gave **his** powerful message about the messiahship of **Yeshua**. The result was that three thousand people were saved.

This was the first “**Messianic mikveh**” because they were **immersed** into the Body of **Messiah** by faith.¹⁴⁶

*Dear Great Living **Father**, What joy that we do not have to wait for heaven to fellowship with the one eternal **God-the Father, Yeshua** and the **Ruach Ha’Kodesh**. Right now on earth, **Your children (John 1:12)** can rejoice in **Your** indwelling **us**. **I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper so He may be with you forever - the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him. You know Him, because He abides with you and will be in you . . . Yeshua answered and said to him: If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him (John 14:16-17, 23).***

*I praise and thank **You** for **Your** eternal cleansing that you offer to all who will turn from their selfish ways and loving look to you as their **Lord** and **Savior**. **For if you confess with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart it is believed for righteousness, and with the mouth it is confessed for salvation (Romans 10:9-10)**. I will boldly **confess Your** name - no matter what trials it brings me for I have been washed by **Your** blood and rejoice in the joy of spending all eternity praising **You** in **Your** holy heaven. **For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18)**. In **Yeshua’s** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

The argument (6:3b): We were not only placed in **Messiah** by **God the Ruach Ha’Kodesh** in order that we might share **His death** and thus be separated from our [**sin nature**], but **we have been immersed into his death (6:3b)** in order that we might share in **His resurrection**, and thus have divine **life** imparted to us. This **Messianic mikveh**, therefore, is not by water because water doesn’t have that much power. It is an internal-spiritual **mikveh** at the moment of salvation, and an outward-physical **mikveh**, afterwards, which is an outward sign of that inward conviction.

Through immersion into his death, we were buried with Him; so that just as, through the glory of the Father, the Messiah was raised from the dead, likewise we too might live a new life (6:4). The Scriptures make both statements: **the God raised Messiah (Romans 6:4 and 8:11; Matthew 16:21, 17:23 26:32)** and that **Messiah Himself arose (Mark 9:21 and Luke 18:33)**. In both expressions the act is due to the divine power which is **Messiah’s** equally with **the Father**. **Yeshua** has **the power to lay**

down His life and take it back up again (John 10:18). The **newness of life** here does not refer to a new quality of experience, but a new quality of **life** given to the believer. **Romans 6** does not deal with the believer's experience or behavior. **Paul** deals with that in **Chapters 12-16** (see **Db - The Mercies of ADONAI**). It is because of our union with **the death**, burial and **resurrection** of **Messiah**, that we are dead to our **[sin nature]**. When **He died**, we **died**; when **He** was **buried**, we were **buried**; when **He** was **resurrected**, we will be **resurrected**. So, the reason we are considered **dead** to our **[sin nature]** is because we are considered co-crucified with **Messiah**.

This tremendous spiritual lesson is illustrated in the miracle of **the resurrection** of **Lazarus** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ia - The Resurrection of Lazarus: The First Sign of Jonah**). When **Yeshua** arrived at Bethany, **Lazarus** had been in the tomb four days, so there was no question about **his death**. By the power of **His** words: **Lazarus! Come out!** **Yeshua raised His friend from the dead**. But, when **Lazarus** appeared at the entrance of the tomb, **he** was wrapped in grave-clothes. So, **Messiah** commanded: **Unwrap him, and let him go!** **He** had been **raised** to walk in **newness of life**. We next see **Lazarus** reclining with **Messiah** at a table, in fellowship with **Him** in **John 12:1-2**. **Dead - raised from the dead** - set free to walk in **newness of life** - fellowshiping with **Messiah**. All these facts illustrate the spiritual truths of our identification with **Messiah** as given in **Ephesians 2:1-10**.¹⁴⁷

The believer's "willpower" has been made completely free. Before salvation it was not free so far as choosing between good and evil is concerned. It was enslaved to **the [sin nature]**. But now, our will stands poised between **the [sin nature]** and the divine nature, with the responsibility to reject the orders of the former and obey the urgings of the latter. To constantly say "No!" to the former, and "Yes!" to the latter becomes a habit, and then victorious living can be achieved. It doesn't mean that someone may slide-back into **sinful** actions. That is all part of the sanctification process, being conformed into the image of **Messiah (Romans 9:29)**. But, what do we do if we stumble and listen to the voice of the **old [sin nature]**? It happens. We're not perfect. Then, **we acknowledge our sins (First John 1:9)**, get back in the saddle, and start saying "Yes" to the divine nature again.¹⁴⁸

Jewish **immersion** is total **immersion** into the water. **The rabbis teach that you need at least 120 gallons of living water, like a stream or ocean. But that living water can be dumped into a big swimming pool and then, as the rabbis teach, the whole thing becomes kosher. The kosher helps the non-kosher.** A Jewish **mikveh** is different from a Roman public bath. The Jewish **mikveh** had two sets of stairs, to walk down into it and then to walk out of it. Why? Because ritually the person was spiritually unclean going down into

the water, and if they walked up the same steps, they would, in a sense, re-contaminate themselves. So, they had two sets of stairs. And, as discussed in **Leviticus 14** and **15**, the **mikvah** itself was not the spiritual cleansing, it was symbolic of something that had already happened. In addition, infant **mikveh** was, and is, unheard of. **Mikveh** always has to have faith.¹⁴⁹

In the **6:1-4**, **Paul** has brought out two major facts. First, that when **ADONAI** saves a **sinner**, **He** separates him from the indwelling **[sin nature]**, and this separation is so effective, that the believer is not compelled to obey it; he has been *permanently* delivered from its power; second, that **YHVH**, at the same time, has imparted the divine nature in the believer, which gives him both the desire and the power to do **God's** will. Now, in **6:5-11**, **Paul** repeats these great truths in the event that some of his readers may not have caught the full implications as presented in the previous verses.¹⁵⁰

Since we have become united with Him in a death like His, we will also be united with Him in a resurrection like His (6:5). The verb **we have become** (Greek: *ginomai*) is in the perfect tense, speaking of a past completed act with continuing consequences. The verb **united with** (Greek: *sumphutos*, meaning *to grow up together with*) speaks of a vibrant union of two people growing up together. The word could be used of congenital twins whose bodies were connected at one point, and whose blood stream flowed through two physical bodies as through one. Likewise, we are now in an entirely new position. The **resurrection of Messiah** meant a **new life** for **Him**. **He** was no longer limited by **His** human body, which had been mortal. But then, **He** had an immortal body. In the same sense, now that we have been co-crucified, co-buried, and co-**resurrected**, we should also be living a **new kind of life**.

The **[sin nature]** is a terrible master, and it finds a willing servant in the human **body**. But the way we know that we can live a **new kind of life** is that the **[sin nature]** has been put **to death**. **We know that our old [sin nature] was put to death on the cross with Him, so that the entire body of our sinful propensities** (before being saved) **might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to our [sin nature] (6:6).** The verb **destroyed** (Greek: *katargeo*, means *to make inactive*). It is as if **Paul** was saying, "Before salvation our **bodies** were used as instruments of unrighteousness; but after salvation, we are to use our **bodies** as **instruments of righteousness (First Corinthians 6:19-20)**. Our **old [sin nature]** no longer has any authority over us. We may surrender to it (and we often do). But it has no legal rights over us. It cannot demand our actions anymore."

For someone who has died has been cleared from sin (6:7). Literally, *For the one*

having died has been justified (or declared innocent) from the sin. **The deathbed confession in the Siddur includes the words, “May my death be an atonement for all the sins, iniquities and transgressions of which I have been found guilty against You,” following the pattern of prayer in the Talmud (B’rakhhot 60a) and the Mishna (Sanhedrin 6:2). Yoma 86a also speaks of death as “finishing” the punishment for sin and quotes Isaiah 22:14, “Surely this iniquity shall not be atoned for (Hebrew: y’khuvar, or covered) until you die.” Paul here is drawing on the Jewish tradition that says an individual’s own death atones for his sin. He applies it by affirming that our union with Messiah, and with His death, means that we have effectively died, and that atones for our sin.**¹⁵¹