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Week 13: Basic Symbols

There are many symbols in the Scripture which point to **Messiah**. However, as far as those commanded for New Covenant believers, **the Lord** gave us two that testify of **Him**: **Immersion** and **Communion**. These are both aspects of our salvation. **Immersion** is done only once for it represents the once-for-all salvation a believer has in **Yeshua (Ephesians 4:5)**. But **Communion** celebrated regularly, since it represents the continuing testimony of **Messiah's** saving atonement for our sins. Both were instituted by the commands of our **Lord (Matthew 28:19; First Corinthians 11:23-26)**.



Immersion: Faithful disciples follow **Yeshua's** commandments, which include the act of **Immersion**. **Then Yeshua came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on the earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Ruach Ha'Kodesh" (Matthew 28:18-19).** The original intent of **Immersion** implied being submerged into the water. The word **Immersion** comes from the Greek word *baptizo*, meaning *to dip, immerse or plunge* **(Mark 7:4; Luke 11:38)**. This term is also used in the textile trade for dyeing clothes, and would also describe a sunken ship. As a result, when **Immersion** was practiced in the Scriptures, it was always near **plenty of water (John 3:23)**.

The symbolism of **Immersion** is a picture of what was spiritually accomplished

when you came to faith in **Yeshua**. It is an outward manifestation of an inward reality. When you trusted in **Messiah**, you were spiritually Baptized into the Body of **Messiah** by **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh**. This is a onetime event enabling you to live out **Messiah's** love and supernaturally empowering you to serve as a member of **His Body (First Corinthians 12:13).** Thus, physical **Immersion** pictures your salvation experience. Coming up out of the water is like your being raised up with **Messiah**, picturing **His death and resurrection, "If we have been united with Him in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin" (Romans 6:5-6).** You have a new life in **Messiah**.



Communion: Yeshua instituted **Communion** while celebrating Passover with **His** apostles **(Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24)**. The feast of Passover is a yearly reminder of **God's** redemption of **His** people from Egyptian bondage **(Exodus 12)**. **Yeshua** used the third cup, traditionally called the Cup of Redemption, to represent **Himself** in the Seder meal (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Kk – The Third Cup of Redemption**). At Passover, the blood of the lamb kept judgment from the Israelites, as **God** said: **when I see the blood I will pass over you (Exodus 12:13)**. **Yeshua** initiated the New Covenant in **His** blood as a picture of the fullness of this redemption **(Jeremiah 31:31; Luke 22:20)**.

Paul gives more detail about **Communion** when he said: **For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes (First Corinthians 11:26)**. What is the significance of the phrase **till He comes**? When **Yeshua** returns, we will no longer need the symbols, for the Reality will be with us! That is why it is for believers only – a testimony of faith in **Yeshua's** death, resurrection, and return.

Both elements, the bread and the cup, are vitally important. The bread reminds us that **He** gave **His** body as payment for the sin debt we owed **God (Second Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 10:5-10)**. Through **His** sacrifice we have forgiveness from **God**. The cup reminds us of **His** blood which cleanses the stain of sin **(First John 1:7)**. Through the shedding of **His** blood, we have fellowship with **God**. In addition to **Immersion** and **Communion**, **Tithing** is an important aspect in the life of every believer.



Tithing: While we are still commanded to **tithe** today, most of us are not thinking of the **tithe** during the Dispensation of the Torah which would amount to about twenty-five percent! Giving in the Dispensation of Grace is proportionate. Today, giving is to be personally determined. **Second Corinthians 9:7** tells us that **each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.** We are to give freely out of what **the LORD** has given freely. The cycle applies not only to material giving but also to every form of giving that is done sincerely to honor **God** and to meet a need. The way of **God's** people has always been the way of **giving**. **To guide us, the Bible teaches seven principles of scriptural giving.**

First, giving from the heart is investing with God. "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use it, it will be measured to you" (Luke 6:38). Paul reiterated **Messiah's** words when he wrote to the believers at Corinth, saying: **Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously (Second Corinthians 9:6)**.

Second, genuine giving is to be sacrificial. David refused to give to **the LORD**

that which **cost** him **nothing**. He insisted **on paying for the threshing floor** on which to **build an altar to the LORD (Second Samuel 24:18-24).** Generosity is not measured by the size of **the gift** itself, but by its size in comparison to what is possessed. **The widow** who put **"two very small copper coins into the treasury gave more than all the others** who **gave** large sums because **they all gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything she had to live on" (Mark 12:42-44; Luke 21:2-4).**

Third, responsibility for giving has no relationship to how much the person has. People who are not generous when they are poor will not be generous when they are rich. They might give a larger amount, but they will not give a larger proportion. **"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much" (Luke 16:10).** It is especially important to teach younger children to give generously to **God** with whatever small amounts of money they receive, because the attitudes and patterns they set as children are likely to carry over into adulthood. **God** doesn't need your money, but **He** wants your heart.

Fourth, material giving correlates to spiritual blessing. To those who are not faithful with mundane things such as money and other possessions, **Messiah** will not entrust things that are of far greater value. **"So, if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own" (Luke 16:11-12).**

Fifth, giving is to be personally determined. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver (Second Corinthians 9:7). Righteous **giving** is done from a righteous and generous heart, not from legalistic percentages of quotas. The Macedonian believers **gave** abundantly out of **their** deep financial poverty because **spiritually they** were rich in love **(Second Corinthians 8:1-2). The Philippian** believers gave out of the spontaneous generosity of **their** hearts, not because **they** felt compelled to do so **(Philippians 4:15-18)**.

Sixth, we are to give in response to need. The early messianic community in Jerusalem **gave their** resources without hesitation. Many of **their** fellow believers had become destitute when **they** trusted in **Messiah** and were ostracized from **their** families and lost employment because of **their** faith. Years later Paul

collected money from the Galatian churches to help meet the great needs that continued to exist among the righteous of the TaNaKh in Jerusalem and that had been intensified by famine.

There have always been charlatans who manufacture needs and play on the sympathy of others. And there have always been professional beggars, who are able to work but would rather not. A believer in **Yeshua** has no responsibility to support such people and should take reasonable care to determine if and when real need exists before giving money. Believers with the gift of discernment are especially helpful in this regard. **The one who is unwilling to work,** Paul said: **shall not eat (Second Thessalonians 3:10).** Encouraging laziness weakens the character of the one who is lazy and also wastes **God's** money.

Seventh, giving demonstrates love, not man-made commandments. The New Covenant contains no commands for specified amounts or percentages of giving. We need to support those who feed us spiritually **(Matthew 10:5-11; Luke 9:1-5; First Timothy 5:17-18)**, but after that the percentage we give will be determined by the love of our own hearts and the needs of others. Under grace, believers are free from the demands of the Torah.

All of these **seven principles in scriptural giving** point to the obligation to **give** generously because we are investing in **the Lord's** work, because we are willing to sacrifice for **Him** who sacrificed **Himself** for us, because it has no bearing on how much we have, because we want spiritual riches more than financial riches, because we have personally determined to **give**, because we want to meet as much need as we can, and because our love compels us to **give**. As in every area of our righteousness, the key is the heart, the inner attitude that should motivate what we say and do.

God does not need our gifts, because **He** is entirely self-sufficient. The need is on our part. Paul to the church at Philippi: **I am not seeking the gift; rather, I am looking for what will increase the credit of balance in your spiritual account (Philippians 4:17). "When** we **give to the needy . . . then** our **Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward** us**" (Matthew 6:4b).** The principle is this: if we remember, **God** will forget; but we forget, **God** will remember. Our purpose should be to meet every need we are able to meet and leave the bookkeeping to **Him**, realizing that **we have only done what was our duty (Luke 17:10).**