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# **Water Baptism and the Old Testament.**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Water Baptism and the Old Testament.

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### Topics.

- Israel understood the spiritual significance of washing in water.
  - Naaman washed in the Jordan River and was made clean.
  - Washing, hyssop and snow.
  - Washing and the fruits of the Spirit.
  - Washing the mind, the heart and the thoughts.
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### For the meaning of Baptism see the title:

- The Definition of Water Baptism.
  - In Water Baptism (ON WEBSITE MENU).
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### ISRAEL UNDERSTOOD THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF WASHING IN WATER

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The following verses not only shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that the national Jewish mind was very conscious of the spiritual significance of the spiritual cleansing power of water, but also that the Jewish priesthood and the Jewish nation clearly understood the spiritual significance that washing and bathing in water held in the mind of God.

- **Exodus 29:4:** Aaron and his sons shalt bring to the tabernacle and shalt WASH them with WATER.
- **Exodus 29:17:** thou shalt cut the sacrificial ram in pieces, and WASH the inwards parts of him
- **Exodus 30:19-21:** Aaron and his sons shall WASH their hands and their feet <sup>20</sup> When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall WASH with WATER that they die not; or when they come near to the altar <sup>21</sup>they shall WASH their hands and their feet, that they die not.
- **Leviticus 1:13:** The priests shall WASH the inwards and the legs (of the sacrificial ram) with WATER.
- **Leviticus 15:5:** anyone who touches his bed (of a man who has a bodily discharge) shall WASH his clothes and bathe himself in WATER.
- **Leviticus 15:13:** When he that hath an issue is cleansed of his issue; then he shall WASH his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running WATER and shall be clean.
- **Leviticus 16:4:** Aaron shall put on the holy garments; therefore he shall wash his flesh in WATER and so put them on.
- **Deuteronomy 23:11:** it shall be when evening approaches, he shall bathe himself with WATER and at sundown that he may re-enter the camp.

God commanded Aaron and his sons to be washed with water before ministering and to wash their hands and their feet with water before entering into the Tabernacle and before they offered burnt offerings so that they did not die. God told Moses washing with water is to be a statute forever to Aaron and his sons (the priesthood) and to him and to his seed

throughout their generations. The priest was given detailed instruction that the legs and inward parts of the sacrifices were to be washed with water and God told the congregation whosoever was ceremonially unclean was to wash their clothes and bathe their flesh in running water and they would be clean. These commands of God to the nation of Israel clearly show that the Jewish priesthood and the Jewish people plainly understood the spiritual significance water held in the mind of God

All Israel was very aware:

- That water was the means for cleaning anyone from impurity.
- That their uncleanness remained on them until they washed in water.
- That bathing in water cleansed from uncleanness and allowed an unclean person to re-enter the camp.

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## NAAMAN WASHED IN THE JORDAN RIVER AND WAS MADE CLEAN

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- **2 Kings 5:10-14:**Elisha sent a messenger to him (Naaman), saying, "Go and WASH in the Jordan River seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be CLEAN."  
<sup>11</sup>But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. <sup>12</sup>Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not WASH in them and be CLEAN?" So he turned and went away in a rage. <sup>13</sup>But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, 'WASH, and be CLEAN?'" <sup>14</sup>So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was CLEAN.

The entire nation of Israel would not only know this famous Jewish story of Elijah one of Israel's greatest prophets telling Naaman the commander of the army of the king of Syria to wash himself in the Jordan River and he would be made completely clean of his leprosy, but also be telling their children of it from generation to generation.

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## WASHING, HYSSOP AND SNOW

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- **Psalm 51:2-7:** After Nathan the prophet went to King David after David had gone into Bathsheba David prayed, WASH me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! ---- NOW GO TO VERSE SEVEN ---- <sup>7</sup>Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; WASH me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Hyssop was used by the Hebrews for:

- Sprinkling the blood of the Passover Lamb on the lintel and door post during the exodus from Egypt so that the death angel would pass over those covered by the blood (Exod. 12:21-25).
- Cleansing a leprous person (Lev. 14:1-8).
- In the purification of sacrifices (Num. 19:6).

Cleansing in Scripture has the following two aspects:

1. Cleansing from the guilt of sin by blood (the hyssop aspect).
2. Cleansing from the defilement of sin (the water aspect) (wash me).

The idea of the hyssop as used by David in this Psalm is not that the mere sprinkling with hyssop would make him clean; but that the hyssop was an emblem which was designed to represent total cleansing and an internal change. David saw himself as a guilty creature and like a leper covered

with a destroying disease who because of his gross sin deserved to be excluded the house of God. The phrase, "Whiter than snow" is used to describe that which is exceeding white, David is praying that God would make him entirely clean; that there might be no remaining pollution in his heart or mind. David and by extension all Israel understood that to be spiritual clean before God required both washing in water and the sacrifice of blood for the covering of the guilty.

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## WASHING AND THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

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- **Isaiah 1:16:** Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, <sup>17</sup>learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

At this time Israel is rebellious, the nation is full of gross sin before God and full of evil doers who have forsaken the LORD the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah the prophet is calling the people of Israel to wash themselves until they are utterly clean. Though the picture is of a person bathing themselves in water to cleanse themselves from all pollution of filthiness the soap to be used to cleanse the nation is not hyssop, water or blood, but the putting on of the fruits of the Spirit (i.e. doing-good; seeking justice, correcting oppression and bringing help to the fatherless, the widows and the poor).

To be made utterly clean before God involves the following three things:

1. Washing in water.
2. A blood covering.
3. A lifestyle that is filled with the fruits of the Spirit.

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## WASHING THE MIND, THE HEART AND THE THOUGHTS

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- **Jeremiah 4:14:** O Jerusalem, WASH your heart from evil, that you may be saved. How long shall your wicked thoughts lodge within you?

The inhabitants of God's Holy City Jerusalem have not only become corrupt in their outward deeds, but their hearts and inward thoughts are full of evil. Though the word washing immediately pictures in the mind an unclean person washing in water to remove every stain of filth upon their body the idea here is that the inhabitants of God's Holy City Jerusalem would make themselves clean by inwardly clothing their hearts and minds with truth, justice and righteousness and allow these to influence all their outward actions and behaviour.

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## SUMMARY

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Since the Old Testament is full of Scripture that identifies water as God's symbol of washing and cleansing the flesh from sin the Jewish people clearly understood the outward significance of cleansing oneself of sin by washing in water long before the New Testament act of water baptism was introduced by John. The lost sheep of the house of Israel, who Jesus came for, would have had no doubt as to what the powerful meaning and symbolism was of a person being fully immersed in the waters of baptism were. This same spiritual principal that applies to reading God's word applies to the ceremonial act of water baptism. If the Bible is read with faith, God and His saving power and wonder will be revealed to the reader, but without faith the Bible will be to some just another interesting story and too many others just another boring and confusing book that has no

relevance today. Likewise if a person enters into the waters of baptism with faith and an honest heart before the Lord Jesus Christ and the knowledge of what it means to God it will be a very real spiritual event to the one being water baptised, but without faith and the knowledge of what it means to God water baptism is no more than having a cool swim in a pool or a quick dip in a river this is why there is no such thing as baby water baptism in the Bible.

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The following are further verses that show that Israel clearly understood the spiritual significance that washing and bathing in water held in the mind of God.

- Exodus 40:12: thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the tabernacle and WASH them with WATER.
- Exodus 40:32: When they entered the tent of meeting, and approached the altar, they WASHED as the LORD had commanded Moses.
- Leviticus 8:6: Moses had Aaron and his sons come near, and WASHED them with WATER.
- Leviticus 15:6: he that sits on anything that hath the issue shall WASH his clothes and BATHE in WATER.
- Leviticus 15:7: He that touches the flesh of him that has an issue shall WASH his clothes and bathe in WATER.
- Leviticus 15:8: he that hath the issue spit upon him that is clean; then he shall WASH his clothes and BATHE in WATER.
- Leviticus 15:10: He that beareth any of those things shall WASH his clothes, and BATHE in WATER.
- Leviticus 15:11: Whomsoever touches a man that hath the issue, and hath not rinsed his hands in WATER he shall WASH his clothes, and bathe in WATER.
- Leviticus 15:12: The vessel of earth, that he toucheth which hath the issue, shall be broken: and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in WATER.
- Leviticus 15:16: If any man's seed of copulation go out from him, then he shall 'WASH' all his flesh in WATER and be unclean until the even.
- Leviticus 15:17: every garment, and every skin, whereon is the seed of copulation, shall be WASHED with WATER and be unclean until the even.
- Leviticus 15:18: The woman also with whom man shall lie with seed of copulation, they shall both BATHE themselves in WATER.
- Leviticus 15:21-22: whosoever toucheth a womans bed that has an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood he shall WASH his clothes, and bathe in WATER <sup>22</sup>And whosoever toucheth anything that she sat upon shall WASH his clothes, and bathe in WATER.
- Numbers 19:13: Anyone who touches the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD and that person shall be cut off from Israel. Because the WATER for impurity was not SPRINKLED on him, he shall be unclean.