

Water and Blood

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Introduction

There is an interesting correlation in scripture between water and blood. We read, *“This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood”* (1 John 5:6, NKJV).ⁱ Water and blood. Together, these are a mystery. Let us discover their significance.

We first see this correlation in the ten plagues in Egypt, as it is written, *“The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land”* (Exodus 4:9). Later, during the Exodus, we see water and blood associated with the Mosaic Covenant. We read, *“Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you [Israel], and you became Mine, says the Lord God. Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil”* (Ezekiel 16:8-9).

As part of the covenant, the Lord prescribed a priestly ritual for cleansing and purifying lepers and their homes. It is written, *“As for the living bird, he [the priest] shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water”* (Leviticus 14:6).

Interestingly, in the Talmud and other writings of the sages, they refer to leprosy as “the redeemer’s disease”ⁱⁱⁱ and referenced by name, the future Messiah as “the leper of the house of Rabbi (*chivara devei Rabbi*).” In support, they cite Isaiah, where it reads, *“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted”* (Isaiah 53:4).ⁱⁱⁱ

Lastly, we see water and blood connected to the fulfillment of the New Covenant. Yeshua washed the feet of His disciples with water. He then officiated the New Covenant with wine—the symbol of blood He would soon shed on the cross. As it is written, *“One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out”* (John 19:34).

Types and Antitypes

Israel’s whole existence appears to be mysteriously wrapped in symbols of water and blood, from her deliverance from Egypt to the covenant the Lord made with them at Mount Sinai, the cleansing and purification ritual given to the priests, and the officiation of the New Covenant in

Christ. These symbols in the Old Testament and their subsequent fulfillment in the New Testament are called *types* and *antitypes*.^{iv}

An *antitype* is not a replacement of what is written, but rather its fulfillment or completion. These are often associated with prophecy. Some Christians incorrectly use *types* and *antitypes* to diminish the prophetic significance of Israel's future redemption, suggesting the new is somehow a replacement for the old. This is called supersessionism or replacement theology. Contrary, the Old and New Testaments are intricately connected as *one* continuing and unfolding story of God's love and redemption for Israel and now, all humanity.

Because Christ was a mystery concealed from the foundation of the world, we can only see the fulfillment of biblical prophecy when we look backward. We then understand that Christ is the fulfillment (*antitype*) of *all* Old Testament scripture (which are the *types* and shadows of Yeshua). Hence, it was said, "*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill*" (Matthew 5:17). To the Old Testaments saints, Christ and the promise of His resurrection were concealed—hidden—including the greater mystery of the Gentiles, joining Israel to become "one new man" in Him.

We read about the resurrection: "*There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ*" (1 Peter 3:21). Therefore, baptism is a fulfillment (*antitype*) of the water and blood (*types*) that appear in the Old Testament and the fulfillment of God's promise concerning our redemption and future resurrection in Christ. And since Christ came by water and blood, our baptism requires the same.^v We will now explore the mysterious symbolism of water and blood fulfilled in Christ's baptism.

Living Water

Regarding "living water," we read, "*And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters*" (Genesis 1:2). The sages expound that the hovering Spirit is that of the Messiah, the soul of creation itself, for they tell us the Messianic era is the full realization of the world that God envisioned at the time of creation.^{vi} Thus, we read, "*All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made*" (John 1:3).

Before God sent forth John, a *kohen* of the Aaronic priesthood, to Baptize Israel with water, He gave Israel a purification ritual through water immersion, called a *mikvah* (which is an immersion pool). The *mikvah* was a *type* for the coming redemption of the Messiah. To the nation of Israel, the *mikvah* offered a remarkable gift of purity and holiness, even if only temporary, until Christ would come and fulfill the Law of Moses.

Jewish Law (*Halachah—the administration of the Mosaic Covenant*) recognizes the world's natural bodies of water as "waters of Divine source." For example, oceans, rivers, wells, and spring-fed lakes. These living waters are considered pure because no human has assisted in their

formation. Jewish Law necessitates the construction of man-made *mikvahs* to collect these Divine sources of water for ritual purification.^{vii}

At Mount Sinai, before the officiation of the Old Covenant, the Israelites were required to consecrate themselves, and according to oral tradition, they used a *mikvah*.^{viii} Miriam's Well (*Be'erah shel Miriam*—referenced in the Talmud) is believed to be the spring that miraculously provided the *mikvah* water for their consecration.^{ix} It is thought that Aaron and his sons were later consecrated into their priesthood by their immersion in this same *mikvah*.

After the construction of the Tabernacle and then the Temple in Jerusalem, the priests and any Jewish person desiring to enter the house of God were required to immerse themselves in a *mikvah*. On the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), the high priest was commanded first to immerse himself in a *mikvah* lest he died in the presence of God.

Although not explicitly mentioned in the Old Testament, the water libation ceremony observed in the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*) was an oral tradition believed to have been received at Mount Sinai when the Torah was given to Israel (*Halachah l'Moshe mi-Sinai*). All burnt sacrifices in the Temple were accompanied by a flour offering and pouring of wine on the altar. These represented the blood of the covenant. During the libation ceremony, water taken from the Temple *mikvah* was poured on the altar as a libation that accompanied the daily morning sacrifice.^x

Today, the *mikvah* is an integral part of a conversion to Judaism, purification before burial, purification of a bride and groom before their wedding, and most significantly, for monthly purification by menstruant women and after childbirth.^{xi} In other words, the *mikvah* is integral to every aspect of Jewish life. It brings us full circle—from our birth to our marriage and eventual death. As we read, *"What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again"* (*Ecclesiastes 1:9*).

The rabbis prophetically teach that the *mikvah* waters have the power to purify and consecrate. I love this quote that reveals their insight into its hidden mystery:

"The mikvah personifies both the womb and the grave; the portals to life and afterlife. In both, the person is stripped of all power and prowess. In both, there is a mode of total reliance, complete abdication of control. Immersion in the mikvah can be understood as a symbolic act of self-abnegation, the conscious suspension of the self as an autonomous force."

"In so doing, the immersing Jew signals a desire to achieve oneness with the source of all life, to return to a primeval unity with God. Immersion indicates the abandonment of one form of existence to embrace one infinitely higher. In keeping with this theme, immersion in the mikvah is described not only in terms of purification, revitalization, and rejuvenation but also, and perhaps primarily, as rebirth."^{xii}

Yes, the *mikvah* is a symbol (a *type*) of rebirth, the full circle of life. And the mystery revealed to us is Christ, the fulfillment of our rebirth in Him—a new creation (and the *antitype*). As it is written, *“It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (Hebrews 9:27-28).*

If the waters of the *mikvah* are a *type* for the coming redemption of the Messiah, then we can correlate its *antitype* and fulfillment to the words of Yeshua when He spoke of “living water.” He said, *“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water” (John 4:10). “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38). “For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 7:17).*

The Word of God comes to life when we understand that Yeshua’s reference to “living water” directly correlates to His redemptive gift and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.^{xiii} In other words, He was speaking of our baptism. Therefore, Christ is our *mikvah* and our baptism, the “living water” of God and the Spirit.

Yeshua promised to live within and eternally flow out of the believer like fountains of living water. Flowing *in* for our healing, we read, *“For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had” (John 5:4).*

And, flowing *out* for the healing of the nations, as it is written, *“This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live... Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine. (Ezekiel 47:8-9 & 12).*

Through the “living water” of Christ, who is our baptism, we are given the ministry of healing and reconciliation. This, primarily for the restoration of Israel and the nations. Yes, it is the church who is called to build and restore the Kingdom of God; as it is written, *“You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings” (Isaiah 58:11-12).*

The Blood

We have been learning about “living water.” We now learn about the blood. Our sages tell us that the soul is clothed in the blood of a man or a woman, giving life to our physical body. As it

is written,^{xiv} *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood [i.e., the soul that sustains physical and corporeal life], and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul"* (Leviticus 17:11).

Per Jewish law, the time from the beginning to completion of a woman's menstrual cycle is called *niddah*.^{xv} The feminine noun *niddah* means separated or isolated and is brought about by a woman's impurity of blood (called *tumah* in Hebrew). *Tumah* is a negative *type*. We will see the positive *antitype* in a moment.

Medieval Biblical commentator Abraham ibn Ezra wrote that the word *niddah* is related to *menadechem*, meaning "those that cast you out."^{xvi} Thus, a menstruant woman was separated from her husband lest she rendered him also ritually unclean.^{xvii} However, after immersion in a *mikvah*, she and her husband could be united again.^{xviii}

Tumah is the root of the word *terumah*. The *terumah* was the gift or offering brought to the sons of Aaron to build the Tabernacle. However, the deeper meaning of the word *terumah* is derived from two separate roots that mean both to *separate* (suggesting sanctifying) and to *elevate* (as in bringing us back to God).

Judaism teaches that death, which originated from sin, is the harbinger of the *tumah*, or impurity—the negative *type*.^{xix} Therefore, the woman's impurity of blood (*type*), which rendered her ritually impure (called *tameh*), is also the picture of Israel's, and hence, all humanity's present sinful condition. We read, *"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear"* (Isaiah 59:2). The positive *antitype*, on the other hand, as in fulfillment, is the blood of Christ that now cleanses us from all sin.^{xx}

Once again, *Tumah* is a negative *type* referencing Israel's separation from God because of her iniquity. In contrast, *Terumah* is a positive *antitype* and fulfillment of the gift of God, which is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, to sanctify Israel through the blood of Christ, so that He would take her as His bride and a holy people unto Himself. This gives clarity to the verse: *"We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose"* (Romans 8:28).

The woman is also a picture of the *bride* of Christ, and of course, the church, the *antitype*, is the fulfillment of God's promise that Yeshua would marry Israel and all the nations that He would join (graft) into her. Yeshua said, *"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd"* (John 10:16).

Sadly, Israel remains separated from her God because of the transgression and rejection of her Messiah. It is not that God has permanently abandoned her.^{xxi} It is just that she seems unable, at least for a season, to receive Christ and the Father's baptism of the Holy Spirit.^{xxii} Thus, we read, *"Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in"* (Romans 11:25).

Yeshua also warned Israel about her rejection when He said, *"If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes"* (Luke 19:42). Israel's rejection of her Messiah has brought riches to the nations,^{xxiii} but unfortunately, also much difficulty and travail for the Jewish people. And yet, these trials are ultimately for Israel's rebirth as a people and nation.

Israel's redemption will come like a woman in labor, giving birth to her child through much pain and suffering, as it is written, *"Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, Like a woman in birth pangs"* (Micah 4:10). *"Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children"* (Isaiah 66:8). *"For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now"* (Romans 8:22).

At the end of this challenging season, God's redemptive plan for Israel will be incredible, not only for the church but the whole world. It is written, *"For if their [Israel] being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?"* (Romans 11:15).

Our Baptism in Christ

Up to this point, we have focused our discussion on two symbols of our baptism in Christ—water, specifically "living water," and blood. We will now introduce a third—fire.

Under the Mosaic Law, water and blood were combined in the purification ritual of the Red Heifer (*para adumah*)—the purification ritual for an Israelite who had been exposed to a dead person.

The rabbis proclaim that the combining (*hamshachah*) of cedarwood and hyssop into the altar of sacrifice of the Red Heifer will draw down the sanctity of God from above.^{xxiv} The placing of *mikvah* water (living water) into the ashes of the Red Heifer (blood commingled with fire),^{xxv} called the "sanctification of the purifying waters" (*Kiddush mei chatat*),^{xxvi} is then believed (emphasis added) "to draw down the ultimate revelation of God the Father through the manifestation of Christ. This manifestation, from the most supremely sanctified levels of Divinity (*Kodesh HaElyon*) that utterly transcend this world."

In other words, the combining of living water and blood with the fire of sacrifice represents the *full* baptism of the Holy Spirit, as it is written, *"For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God"* (Deuteronomy 4:24).^{xxvii} The Apostle John also compared the Holy Spirit to fire when he said, *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire"* (Matthew 3:11). *"Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you"* (Luke 24:49).

Let us revisit our earlier discussion about procreation and childbirth and how these are a *type* for us becoming a new creation in Christ (the *antitype* and fulfillment). Yeshua used this *typology*

when He spoke to Nicodemus, one of the Temple priests, saying, *"Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again"* (John 3:3). Nicodemus could not understand or see this mystery of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. So, he asked Yeshua, *"Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"*

Yeshua lovingly answered him, saying, *"Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit"* (John 3:4-6). Yeshua was trying to teach Nicodemus about the soon coming *antitype* and baptism of the Holy Spirit and its correlating *types* symbolized by water and blood. He impressed Nicodemus's spiritual understanding of the ritual sacrifice of the Red Heifer—water and blood commingled with fire.

We can now conclude that the *full* baptism of the Holy Spirit comes on multiple levels. The living water is for our cleansing and inner healing, and the communion with wine (symbolizing the blood and fire of Christ) is for our purification and sanctification.

We when first come to Christ, we receive His living water that cleanses and heals us. We also receive His peace; as it is written, *"And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*. We are then given what some theologians refer to as the second baptism of the Holy Spirit. This second baptism being the refining fire (blood) of the Holy Spirit. It is written, *"These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed"* (1 Peter 1:7).

This differentiation does not suggest that we cannot receive both simultaneously, nor that our immediate healing and sanctification is now suddenly complete. No, we must continue to receive Yeshua's peace and healing, and we must continue to receive His ongoing purification and cleansing until the Lord returns for us.^{xxviii} We do not, however, lose our salvation.

The refining baptism of the Holy Spirit also brings His power. It is written, *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes [with tongues of fire]^{xxix} on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"* (Acts 1:8). This part of our baptism comes through obedience and service to Christ and may lead to an uncomfortable condition—our suffering. It is written, *"For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake"* (Philippians 1:29).

Yeshua told His disciples, *"You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father"* (Matthew 20:23). Therefore, *"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed"* (1 Peter 4:12-13).

Being a Christian means that we are likely to be persecuted for His namesake, a fiery ordeal. However, this persecution will also bring about our refinement, and more, as is it written, *“Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin” (1 Peter 4:1)*. Yes, this part of our baptism not only refines us it also burns away our sin.

Conclusion

God has called us to be baptized in living water, blood, and fire. Water that cleanses, heals, and brings inner peace, and blood and fire that sanctifies refines and empowers. The first is unto our salvation, and the second is for our ongoing sanctification and transformation. As Christians, we are called to fast, which is our daily sacrifice, and if necessary, even willingly sacrifice our lives for Christ. And what should our daily sacrifice look like?

We read, *“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?” (Isaiah 58:6-7)*.

We can undoubtedly abstain from food and other necessities. Yeshua instructed us, *“But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting” (Matthew 6:17-18)*. However, I believe the greater fast and sacrifice is to serve Christ unconditionally and without reward. As it is written, *“Whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave” (Matthew 20:27)*—yes, serving Christ by feeding and sheltering the poor, and serving Christ, even if we are persecuted, by freeing the captives and sharing the Bread of Life and His Living Water, so that we might save some of them.

Amen!

ⁱ All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

ⁱⁱ *The Redeemer's Disease*. Translated and annotated by Rahmiel-Hayyim Drizin from PaRDeS HaBahir. Chabad.org.

ⁱⁱⁱ Shurpin, Yehuda. *Why Is Moshiach called a Metzora (Lepers)?* Chabad.org.

^{iv} Typology in Christian theology and Biblical exegesis is a doctrine or theory concerning the relationship of the Old Testament to the New Testament. Events, persons, or statements in the Old Testament are types pre-figuring or superseded by antitypes, events or aspects of Christ or his revelation described in the New Testament. In the fullest version of the theory of typology, the whole purpose of the Old Testament is viewed as merely the provision of types for Christ, the antitype or fulfillment. Typology (theology) Wikipedia.

^v 1 John 5:6.

^{vi} *The Tanya of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi*. Elucidated by Rabbi Yosef Wineberg. Translated from Yiddish by Rabbi Levy Wineberg and Rabbi Sholom B. Wineberg. Edited by Uri Kaploun. Published and copyright by Kehot Publication Society. Chabad.org.

^{vii} Slonim, Rivkah. *The Mikvah*. Chabad.org.

^{viii} Exodus 19:10.

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- ^{ix} The Zohar explains that Miriam stood by the waters of the Nile River and watched over her baby brother Moses to ensure he would be safe. The Midrash connects the well to Miriam's exuberant praise after the Splitting of the Sea. Since she was so grateful for a miracle that occurred through water, G-d rewarded her with water. Shurpin, Yehuda. *Miriam's Well: Unraveling the Mystery*. Chabad.org.
- ^x Kitov, Eliyahu. *The Water Libation*. Chabad.org.
- ^{xi} Weisberg, Chana. *Why the difference in the laws of ritual purity between the birth of males and females?* Chabad.org.
- ^{xii} Ibid. *The Mikvah*.
- ^{xiii} John 7:39.
- ^{xiv} Leviticus 17:11.
- ^{xv} *What is Niddah?* Chabad.org.
- ^{xvi} Wikipedia.
- ^{xvii} From the portion of the Talmud, *Niddah*. Translated into English with Notes, Glossary, and Indices. By Rev. Dr. Israel W. Slotki, M.A., Litt.D. Come-and-Hear.com.
- ^{xviii} Mikvah: Living Waters. Chabad.org.
- ^{xix} *Terumah—No Small Token*. Chabad of the West Side, New York, NY.
- ^{xx} Hebrews 10:22.
- ^{xxi} Romans 11:2.
- ^{xxii} Luke 24:49.
- ^{xxiii} Romans 11:12.
- ^{xxiv} Note of the Rebbe: "So it is explained here. But see *Likkutei Torah, Chukat, loc. cit.*, especially the conclusion of the passage beginning *Tosefet Biur* on the *maamar* beginning *VeYikchu Eilecha* (p. 61b), [where the Alter Rebbe explains that the cedar wood and the hyssop relate to the *avodah* of elevation, whereas only the addition of the waters is an *avodah* of drawing Divine energy downward]." Chabad.org.
- ^{xxv} Ibid. The Tanya of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi—*Parah*, ch. 6.
- ^{xxvi} Ibid. The Tanya of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi.
- ^{xxvii} Hebrews 12:29.
- ^{xxviii} Ephesians 4:23. Hebrews 10:14.
- ^{xxix} Acts 2:3.