

Message# 191 - 5-29-2022 - Christians Believe that Jesus Fulfilled the Prophets - H2O Water Baptism Ended with the Old Covenant

Preached first on 5/29/2022 on www.molibertyradio.us

Good morning everyone. Thank you for tuning into the message. I sure hope these messages are inspiring to you, I hope they are a blessing to you - and above all - I hope they are challenging you to consider - more than ever - what it means to be immersed into Christ.

Friends, there is so much to cover here - I am just amazed each week at what we do cover - then - I sit back and realize just how much more there is. As I go back and reflect on the things we have covered - I am made aware of - well for instance - take the study of mikveh. I hope that that word which - I guarantee you - for those who have advocated for H2O water baptism - outside of the jews - and maybe - I doubt it - but maybe the mormons - but outside of those two belief systems - the "churches" of Christ, the Baptists, the Methodists, Presbyterians, all those who would receive the label of "protestant" - I guarantee you - they have never heard the Hebrew word mikveh - let alone what it was in Bible times - and what it is to judaism today.

As I pointed out to you before, mikveh was found on the week of Creation - and it was first mentioned in Genesis 1:10. To me, it is very sad that those of us - and I include myself although I have preached against H2O water baptism for over 30 years - I did not know - until I began researching for this series - mikveh - and its importance in the Scripture. It is vitally important to understanding mikveh in order to understand what Old Covenant baptism was - then how that Old Covenant baptism pointed to New Covenant baptism - New Covenant baptism - immersion into Christ - immersion into the Authority of Christ - immersion into the death of Christ so that our old man would die and a new man would be created - spiritually to walk in newness of life.

The idea that that takes place because of an Old Covenant physical ritual is a tough one for me to continue to process.

All the physical aspects of the Old Covenant - we are repeatedly told in the glimpses we are provided as to what the New Covenant is - all those physical aspects of the Old - were replaced with spiritual aspects. Every single element of the Old Covenant that required a physical act - whether it was an animal sacrifice - whether it was a baptism preceding an animal sacrifice - whether it was physical circumcision - every single bit of those Old Covenant deeds, those Old Covenant works - were replaced with spiritual

things - in the New Covenant world.

So mikveh, for instance, first reference - week of Creation - Genesis 1:10 -

[10] And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

I believe it is clearly safe to say this was talking about physical H₂O water. And God saw that it was good. In that same week - God created the Light - and said that it was good - physical light. Then, as we get to the beginnings of the New Covenant World - we find out from John chapter 1 - that the Light and the Word - things referenced from Creation - were all pointing to Christ - all the way back to the day - the week of Creation. And so is the same with the water.

All the physical elements of the Old World were designed for the purpose of pointing to the Messiah King that would some day come. The Seas, the waters, the conduits, the pools - all of that was for the purpose of cleansing the flesh in the Old Covenant World - which again - was pointing to the cleansing of the heart - something that the New Covenant would be bringing in a far better way - than what came with all the physical aspects of the Old World.

Open your Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 17, please, just for a few minutes this morning. I'd like to read the whole chapter, but for sake of time, I am only going to read verse 13.

We're going to talk about mikveh again just for a few minutes.

Mikveh, in the Old Covenant World - were the waters that were used for the purification rituals that required H₂O. I have shown you what Laws that God gave Moses required the use of physical H₂O water - for the remission of sins. Not all of them did. But several did. I have shown you chapter and verse where the washing of the clothes and the bathing of the flesh was required as part of the Law God gave Moses for the remission of sins - diseases and infirmities were also referred to as "sins" (you've seen that) and physical H₂O water was required by the Law God gave Moses.

The washing of the clothes and the bathing of the flesh was also a requirement before entering the temple - as no defilement - no uncleanness was allowed into the temple. If Israelites brought uncleanness or defilement into the temple - they risked being killed. I have shown you chapter and verse support for all these statements.

I showed you how Hezekiah was called the greatest of the kings of Judah in his time - why? - because he brought a conduit of flowing water into Jerusalem and he built the pool of Siloam. Both of which were used by the Israelites for the purpose of making sure they were clean before they entered the temple.

Water was scarce during Bible times in that area - but because of the way the Law of God was delivered to Moses - once we see this - we easily see how they had become obsessed with physical H₂O water and cleanliness. Why? Because people should be obsessed with the physical cleanliness of the flesh? No. Because the water of the Old Covenant World - pointed to the Living Water that would same day become the Water of Life flowing from the throne and from the Lamb of God. Now, Jeremiah 17, verse 13. Here is another instance of mikveh.

[13] O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.

It takes study. I have said before, we should never take words for granted. We need to look at the words in the verses we read and not just take for granted we know what they mean. Again, why? Well, first of all, what we are reading in English was translated over 400 years ago by people who did not use language the same way we do. And second, if we are to believe what we have been told, the book of Jeremiah was translated into English from Hebrew. So, by the time it has gotten to us, thousands of years later, we need to study as hard as we can, with as many tools and aids as we can, led by the Holy Spirit of God which is not some mysterious ghost spirit being floating around in the air.

The Holy Spirit of God is the Will of God. It is what the purpose of Creation is. It is what God wants for His people. It's the plan, it's the way, it's how we are supposed to be living - and it comes from understanding the Will of God. To me, that's pretty simple. It is that the Creator of everything - created people - created the world - created all that's in it - for the purpose of that created ones - living with Him and Him only as their God, their King, their Lawgiver, their definer of good and evil, right and wrong. Pretty simple.

Men are not to submit themselves to the "laws" the "statues" the definitions of right and wrong, good and evil, of mere men. No matter the threat. No matter the consequence - the Will of God is for all men, everywhere, to submit to His Kingdom and His alone. Now, when we look at the Scriptures through that lens - through that

perspective - I believe that Spirit - that Attitude - that Perspective - will guide us into all truth. That's a promise. Of course, it goes without saying - that Fulfilled Bible Prophecy is what brings us to that understanding.

So, we look at Jeremiah 17, verse 13. Now, the obvious thing here, at least to me, is that these people had forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters.

But look before that, look at what, in the Old Covenant World, what God Himself was called. The hope of Israel.

Take your concordance out and look up each word in this verse. In the Old Covenant World - the hope of Israel - was - mikveh. It was the gathering of the waters for the purpose of washing away physical impurities of the flesh - and what was the purpose? Why was that so important in the Old Covenant World - because it pointed to the New Covenant World - the fountain of living waters.

This is why the story of the Samaritan woman at the well is so important. Jesus told her - that He was the fountain of living waters. When she first met Christ - her Old Covenant World perspective brought her to a discussion of water - and the only thing she could think about was physical H₂O water. Jesus told her, drink of this water - the water from Jacob's well - and you will thirst again - but if you drink of the Water that I give you - you will never thirst again.

Jesus was the fulfillment of Jeremiah 17:13 - He was - He is the New Covenant mikveh. And just like the Water He offered the woman at the well - that Water was spiritual - it was not physical H₂O water. The physical H₂O water of the Old Covenant is not good enough. It needed to be replaced - and it indeed was replaced by the Water of Life, the fountain of Life, the river of Life - and that spiritual water is Christ. The mikveh was called the hope of Israel - and the hope of Israel was fulfilled in the Living Waters which is Jesus Christ.

Today, spring of 2022, the physical H₂O waters of mikveh are still required, still demanded - by who - "church of Christ" - yes - but that's not why I spent so much time on mikveh. I spent my time on mikveh to show you that the jews today - require full body immersion into a mikveh - a pool of water - in order to become a jew. Listen again, quote:

"According to rabbinical teachings, which dominated even during the existence of the

Temple (Pes. viii. 8), Baptism, next to circumcision and sacrifice, was an absolutely necessary condition to be fulfilled by a proselyte to Judaism (Yeb. 46b, 47b; Ker. 9a; 'Ab. Zarah 57a; Shab. 135a; Yer. Kid. iii. 14, 64d)."

[Note please those are all references to the Jewish Talmud - which the "identity preachers" would all say they hate.] Continuing:

"Baptism was practiced in ancient (Hasidic or Essene) Judaism, first as a means of penitence, as is learned from the story of Adam and Eve, who, in order to atone for their sin, stood up to the neck in the water, fasting and doing penance—Adam in the Jordan for forty days, Eve in the Tigris for thirty-seven days (Vita Adæ et Evæ, i. 5-8)."

[Again. Reference the Talmud. You won't find that in the Bible - but you will find it in the Talmud.]

"The Baptism of the proselyte has for its purpose his cleansing from the impurity of idolatry, and the restoration to the purity of a new-born man. This may be learned from the Talmud (Soṭah 12b) in regard to Pharaoh's daughter, whose bathing in the Nile is explained by Simon b. Yoḥai to have been for that purpose. The bathing in the water is to constitute a rebirth, wherefore "the ger is like a child just born" (Yebamoth 48b); and he must bathe "in the name of God"—"leshem shamayim"—that is, assume the yoke of God's kingdom imposed upon him by the one who leads him to Baptism ("maṭbil"), or else he is not admitted into Judaism (Gerim. vii. 8). For this very reason the Israelites before the acceptance of the Law had, according to" 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia Philo on the Decalogue ("De Decalogo," ii., xi.), as well as according to rabbinical tradition, to undergo the rite of baptismal purification (compare I Cor. 10. 2, "They were baptized unto Moses [the Law] in the clouds and in the sea")."

Remember again, I showed you from the Bible - not the Talmud - I showed you how before the Israelites in the wilderness received the Law - they were required to wash their clothes (baptism).

The Jewish religion requires that male and female conversion candidates to immerse themselves in a ritual bath called a mikveh. Jewish baptism by immersion in ancient times was to be performed in the presence of witnesses (Yebamoth 47b). The person being baptized made special preparations including a fresh profession of his faith before the designated "fathers of the baptism" (Kethuboth 11a; Erubin 15a).

*"Baptism did not start with John the Baptist. It was the practice of the Jews to baptize converts as much as five centuries before John the Baptist was born. John was simply building on what was already established. ... Some time between 200 to 500 years before the birth of Jesus and John, baptism became a part of the traditional procedure for conversion to Judaism." R. J. Grigaitis Jewish Baptism 2007-06-08
http://grigaitis.net/home/rjgrigaitis_resume.html*

[Let me stop here for just a second. I want to remind you that all of this is Jewish teaching. It is not from the Bible - it is from the Talmud. The Bible says that Old Covenant baptism was for lepers, for others who had issues of the flesh, for those who had touched dead things, and for cleansing prior to entering the temple. Those were the purposes of baptism.

What I'm wanting you to see here from the Jewish rabbis is that they are demanding full body immersion in a mikveh - physical H₂O water - in order to become a convert to Judaism.

I am not at all convinced that what they are saying John the Baptist was doing - was in fact what John was doing. But on this point, I absolutely agree - whatever it was that John was doing - it was not something new. There is no record anywhere in our Bibles of John explaining what he was doing.

Now, if you want to adopt ceremonial rituals for H₂O water immersion - apart from the Law God gave Moses - then friends - look to the rabbis. Look to the Jews - because that's where they claim the origin of the full body immersion in physical H₂O water comes from. Now people can and probably will get mad at me for saying that - but sometimes the truth really hurts.

There is no Biblical record showing anywhere as to what type of ceremony, what type of ritual that should be attributed to John the Baptist. Not from the Jews and not from something called "church." The Biblical record we have for the use of physical H₂O water comes from the passages of Scripture in the Law God gave Moses that we have extensively gone through in this series.

The "churches" have tried to say for ever - that baptism was something new that came onto the scene with John the Baptist. And that this commission to change Old Covenant baptism (and actually very few of them know or admit that there were Old Covenant baptisms) into New Covenant baptism was something new for "Christians."

Friends, the Law God gave Moses begins in the book of Exodus, it goes through Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. There is a lot there concerning the Law God gave Moses - which *was* absolutely NEW to the children of Israel.

Yet, we are to believe that H2O physical water baptism was something new to the scene and it is the method of salvation - it's the people get into the Kingdom - it's the way they get "saved" - it's the way people into the New Covenant - and there's not a single verse of Scripture telling us how it's supposed to be done?

The new Law that God gave Moses contains volumes explaining it - but baptism comes onto the scene and there is NOTHING that explains what it is supposed to look that?

Listen, the "church" of Christ cannot take a Christian Bible and show what the ceremony, what the ritual of H2O water baptism is supposed to look like. The Mormons can't do it. The Baptist can't do it. The catholics can't do it - and the jews can't do it. The only thing the jews can do is take the talmud and use it as their foundational authority to demand physical H2O water - full body immersion into the water - into to be a bonafide jew.

There is no Biblical teaching as to what their claims of H2O water baptism in the New Covenant - looks like - and it's pretty discouraging - because some out there demand it for "salvation" - for "entrance into the kingdom" and they can't take the Bible and show us what it's supposed to look like.

Friends, I can show you lots and lots of people who have been poured, sprinkled, or dunked in physical H2O water - and they are no more fully immersed into the Authority, into the Name of Christ - than the man in the moon.

And, on the flip-side, I *can* show you people who are fully immersed into Jesus Christ, fully immersed into the Name, into the Authority of Jesus Christ - as evidenced by the way they live their lives - and ritualistic physical H2O water has NEVER been applied to their physical bodies. And that's because the Living Water that comes from Christ is not physical - and it cleanses the inside of a man, woman boy or girl - and it does something that physical H2O water can never do.

Continuing the quote from "Mystical Mikveh Immersion", The Jewish Background of Christian Baptism, by Ron Moseley, PH.D. Quote:

"Josephus tells us that even during the years of war (66-73 A.D.) the laws of ritual immersion were strictly adhered to (Josephus Wars, 4:205). Herod's Temple itself contained immersion baths in various places for the priests to use, even in the vaults beneath the court (Commentary to Tam. 26b; Tam. 1:1)."

Baptism was extremely common to mark events and among the Nasarenes - there were at least three forms of Baptism, or what was called the mikveh.

RISHAMA BAPTISM was performed daily with a covered head, just before sunrise and before all religious ceremonies.

TAMASHA BAPTISM was simple triple immersion in the river.

MASBUTA BAPTISM: The third ablution, or 'full baptism'

What I'm trying to get you to see by trying to teach you about mikveh - is that the physical H₂O water of the Old Covenant - its purpose was to point to the Living Water that Jesus, the Messiah King brought.

Who continues with mikveh today as a physical ritual commanded for conversion? The Jews. The Jews require it yet today. Why? Because the Jews did not accept Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the Living Water of Jeremiah 17:13.

Once again, this is why, when we started out in this series, I was trying to drive home the point that the Fulfillment of the Prophecies and understanding John's baptism(s) was so important. It all goes hand in hand. If someone does not believe that Jesus was the Christ, that He fulfilled ALL - A-L-L the prophecies - then Jesus was not the Messiah. If Jesus was not the Messiah - then the Old Covenant World is still continuing today. If the Old Covenant World is still continuing today - the Old Covenant baptism - whatever it was - is still in existence today - and not just Old Covenant baptism - not just Old Covenant circumcision - but the Old Covenant sacrifices should still be continuing today.

This is also why I kept showing you things inside the "churches" today - that are still carry-overs from the temple and synagogues. "Vestibules, altars, baptistries, services" - and more - all carry overs from the Old Covenant World. The "churches" would never admit that - in fact - they'd get mad if they were accused of such things - but it's the truth. Mikvehs is what they are - they are not baptistries - that word is not in the Bible - not in the Greek - they are mikvehs - and they serve the exact same purpose today as they did in the times where the Jews rejected Christ.

Over the last several weeks - we've been dealing with the phrase "for the remission of sins" and I've been showing you the instances found in the last 27 books of our Bibles.

I have shown you - from the Bible (in the Gospels) - that there was only one instance of the phrase "for the remission of sins" that led us to believe that physical H2O water was a requirement. And that was one of John's baptisms. The rest of the "for the remission of sins" came about from belief that Jesus was the Christ. It was faith - faith in His name - in His Authority - that brought remission of sins - more times - than anything that had to do with physical H2O water.

That reminds me of something I meant to say a minute ago - I need to go back to something. Quote, from the rabbis:

The bathing in the water is to constitute a rebirth, wherefore "the ger is like a child just born" (Yebamoth 48b); and he must bathe "in the name of God"—"leshem shamayim"—that is, assume the yoke of God's kingdom imposed upon him by the one who leads him to Baptism ("maṭbil"), or else he is not admitted into Judaism (Gerim. vii. 8).

Alright, notice

he must bathe "in the name of God"

I will say - with all assuredness - that every time we see the application of physical H2O water in the last 27 books of the Bible - in the Gospels - then almost exclusively in the book of Acts - we are witnessing Old Covenant baptisms - washings - that were commanded by the Law that God gave Moses. And whatever those baptisms were, whatever those washings were - if they involved physical H2O water - the disciples were now teaching that it had to be done - in the name of Jesus Christ. Not in the name of Moses, but in the Name of - which means - by the Authority of - Jesus Christ.

You need to realized how offensive this was to all those religious leaders in Jerusalem who refused to believe on Jesus. This made them furious. Interestingly enough, those religious leaders in Jerusalem that refused Jesus Christ - well - they didn't accept Moses, they didn't accept the prophets, all they wanted was to keep their own traditions. But all the Old Covenant baptisms - and particularly now - those that we see in the book of Acts - were Old Covenant baptisms - by the followers of Christ - but instead of being done in the name of God or in the name of Moses - they were being

done in the Name of - in the Authority of Jesus Christ - and this was seen by those men as someone who was taking the place of the God of the Old Covenant World.

This is why the apostles were hated so much.

Now, with all of that said, I want to revisit again - and once again - it is vitally important that we see this - that we understand it. During the times of the book of Acts - yes - after Christ ascended the throne - after Christ officially became the Last of the Kings that God allowed Israel - it was perfectly fine for those people who had “accepted Christ” to continue fulfilling the Law God gave Moses - but - fulfilling the Law God gave Moses - *including offering animal sacrifices* - it was perfectly fine for them to do so.

The days were ending. The times where sacrificing and baptizing in H₂O and circumcising the flesh physically - those times were coming to an official end - but they had not yet come - even after the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, even after the ascension to the throne at the resurrection of Christ.

We should just about have this passage of Scripture memorized by now - but once again - please turn to Acts chapter 21. In light of what I said to you last week - regarding the continuing of the Law God gave Moses in the book of Acts - and the fact that it was not YET - not YET - a bad thing - with that in mind, please look at Acts 21 again, verse 1.

- [1] And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:
- [2] And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.
- [3] Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.
- [4] And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

Let me set the stage, if you will. Paul and his brethren (the other believers in Christ who had been with him), had been away from Jerusalem. They were with the “gentiles” - Israelites who were not living at Jerusalem. Now, Paul and those that were with him, were on their way back to Jerusalem to unite with James and others who apparently were called to preach pretty much exclusively to the Israelites who were living in or very near Jerusalem. I believe it is safe to say they were those who had ready access to the temple. That distinction and its importance can be seen from the text as we go

along. As they were on their way to Jerusalem, they stopped in Tyre and they joined up with some other believers - believers that Jesus was the Christ. Those believers actually tried to get Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. Now verse 5.

[5] And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

[6] And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

[7] And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

[8] And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

[9] And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

[10] And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

[11] And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

I believe it's safe to say these “gentiles” were men living in Jerusalem who had not accepted Jesus as the Christ - and they would have wanted to hurt Paul, or even kill him, because Paul was preaching Jesus as the Christ. We'll see this a little later in the text (the jews from Asia). Verse 12.

[12] And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

And there's a reason why they did not want Paul to go to Jerusalem.

[13] Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Friends, once again, what does this mean? Just like when we hear the word “baptism” and we immediately drawn like Pavlov's dogs to an understanding of water - we need to

also remove ourselves from the “church” garbage that “in the name of” means some hocus pocus magic show that comes from tossing around the word Jesus. Which is all that is. The name Jesus means nothing by itself. Saying the word “Jesus” does mean you can exorcise Linda Blair's demons - or you can make Damien a cute little kid again - because you said “Jesus” and he suddenly became transformed into a sweet little boy and stopped being the antichrist.

In the Name of means - in the Authority of. It means - show me your papers. It means show me your license. It means, where did you get permission to do this or that? It means by whose Authority do you do what you do? Do you live by the permission of mere men - or do you live by the Authority of Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords? As followers of Christ, everything we say, everything we do, is all to be done in the Name of, by the Authority of - Jesus Christ.

Paul, and the rest of these believers were trying to persuade all who would listen in Israel - that this Jesus, Whom you had slain and hung on a tree - this Jesus - God had made both Lord and Christ.

The jews of that time - just like the jews today - did not accept that. They did not believe that Jesus fulfilled the prophets. They did not believe that Jesus fulfilled Moses. They did not believe that Jesus fulfilled the promise to David. And now Paul, and Peter and James and John, and the rest of them, were going up against the entire law system of that day - and telling people that everything that was to be done now - was to be done - in the Name of - in the Authority of - Jesus Christ.

And friends, this includes everything that was STILL going on in the temple in Jerusalem at that time. And the daily sacrifice was STILL going on. That is why they met daily in the temple, praising God. The true believers were going into the temple - observing the Law God gave Moses - and trying to persuade the rest of them to do those services of the temple - the deeds of the Law - the works of the Law - but do so in the Name of Jesus.

Will you please think about this? When we get to the writings of Paul and he goes to such great lengths to tell his listeners that the works of the Law were no longer necessary - who was he writing to? Was he writing to the jewish rabbis who murdered Jesus? Was he writing to the high priest who murdered Jesus? No. Absolutely no. He was writing to those who had embraced Jesus as the Christ. And he was helping them to understand that the times of keeping the Law God gave Moses were coming to an end.

Most, if not all of these believers in the book of Acts - were keeping the Law God gave Moses. They were continuing to go into the temple and they were sacrificing animals. AFTER the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. After the ascension of Christ to the throne. This cannot be denied. The difference is however - they were keeping the Law God gave Moses in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. That included baptisms - *whatever they were* - it included circumcisions - and it included sacrifices.

Get over it. It was not a bad thing - yet. The temple was still in existence. Yes, the temple that God had instructed their fathers to make according to the Law God gave Moses and it was a good thing. Wasn't the best thing. Was going to be replaced. But it was the house of God. It was the building of God. It was not YET a bad thing - for those believers to keep the Law God gave Moses - in the Name of Jesus Christ. Now verse 14:

[14] And when he [Paul] would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

[15] And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

[16] There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

[17] And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

Please take note of this. This is not hard. And, friends, I'm not being condescending, I'm not trying to speak down to anyone - but these are believers. Paul and his company had now arrived in the house of the believers - those that had become followers of Jesus Christ. These were not lost men. These were not men who needed Paul to teach Jesus to them so they could repent and become followers of Christ. These were the brethren living at Jerusalem - who had ALREADY accepted Christ. The text is as clear as can possibly be.

While they were at Tyre, the believers there asked Paul not to go, because they were concerned for Paul's well-being. Paul did not go to the lost. Paul did not go the high priest - Paul went to the safe company of the others who had embraced Jesus Christ. Verse 18:

[18] And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

James, who was that? That is one of Jesus' disciples. This James was closer to Jesus than Paul ever was. The Bible tells us that Paul had a brief interaction with Jesus - while

James was with Jesus for His entire ministry - which was at least three years. Paul didn't see Jesus' miracles. Paul wasn't there the day Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Paul wasn't there the day Jesus fed 5,000 men - not including women and children - with 2 fish and five loaves of bread. Paul wasn't there when Jesus healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, made the lame walk - touch a leper - Paul wasn't there. Paul wasn't there when Jesus had private, personal conversations with His disciples - **but James was**. Paul wasn't there! **But James was**. This is the James Acts chapter 21 is talking about. This isn't some lost sheep Israelite who needed to be taught about Jesus. **This was James - one of the original disciples of Jesus Christ**. Verse 19:

[19] And when he [Paul] had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles [those not living at Jerusalem] by his ministry.

They are sitting together in the same place sharing stories about their ministries. Paul was telling James about the things God had done among those not living at Jerusalem.

Now, it's James' turn. James is now going to tell Paul about **his** ministry in Jerusalem. **This is not an unbeliever, this is not someone that Paul was going to “lead to Christ.”**

This was James.

James now begins to tell Peter about the things going on in Jerusalem among the many people who had embraced Jesus Christ as their Lord. Verse 20:

[20] And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him (said to Paul), Thou seest, brother, **how many thousands of Judahites there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:**

Once again, these are believers. These are followers of Jesus Christ. This is after the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. This is after He ascended to the throne. These are followers of Christ. These are not unbelievers.

and they are all zealous of the law:

What Law? What Law were they all zealous of? They were all zealous of the Law God gave Moses. Why? Because the temple was still in existence. The Law God gave Moses was in the process of vanishing away - it had not vanished away completely yet. These

believers - these followers of King Jesus - **were ZEALOUSLY keeping the Law.** The difference was, they were keeping the Law God gave Moses - by the Authority of - in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. That's what this whole story is about. In the book of Acts - **it was perfectly fine to keep the Law God gave Moses - in the Name of Jesus Christ.** I can't imagine why this is so hard to accept.

The temple was still in existence. The city of Jerusalem - the City of God - the City of the Great King - was still in existence. It was God Who instructed the temple to be built. God instructed the sacrifices to be instituted. God instructed baptisms to be performed - they were not bad things - *at least not yet.*

The day would come - the day was coming - when the temple would be destroyed - and all the rituals that took place in and for the temple would cease to exist. But that day was not yet.

Friends, once that temple did come down - and that happened at AD70 - it is no longer permissible to keep those rituals. There are those that absolutely demand that the rituals continue - but I'm telling you - it is not a good thing to try to keep those rituals going - once that temple came down at AD70. All the rituals, all the physical aspects of the Old Covenant World - pointed to the New Covenant World. Once He made all things new - it is no longer allowed to keep anything from the Old World going in the New World. And that includes H2O water baptisms.

H2O water baptism of the Old Covenant World has been fully replaced by being immersed, by being placed into, by being fully consumed by, the Authority of Jesus the Christ. Back to verse 20 again, then on to 21.

[20] And when they heard it [when they heard Paul's report], they glorified the Lord, and said unto him [unto Paul], Thou seest, brother, **how many thousands of Judahites there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:**

But uh oh, Paul. We have a little problem here with you.

[21] And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Judahites which are among the Gentiles [the lands outside of Jerusalem] to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

[22] What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will

hear that thou art come.

People can try to spin this all they want to. I've even heard really smart people say that these were unbelievers who were trying to convince Paul to keep the Law - and so - in order for Paul to reach them for Christ - "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." Or, "I became all things to all men, that I might win them."

No, that is not at all what is going on here. These are true followers of Jesus Christ. **This is James, for goodness sake.** These are not lost men. They are followers of Jesus Christ and they have a problem with Paul and the problem is that Paul was telling those people who did not have easy access to the temple - that it was okay for them to go ahead and forsake the Law God gave Moses - and James and these other brethren who were **ZEALOUS OF THE LAW** - were telling Paul what he was preaching was not right.

So, then they say to Paul. Verse 23.

[23] Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

[24] Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; **but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.**

To say that these followers of Christ were not keeping the Law God gave Moses - after Jesus Christ had risen from the grave and ascended to the throne - and that no way would Christ allow His followers to keep the Law after He became King - well - friends - let's just take Acts 21 and rip it right out of the pages of our Bibles - because this is exactly what James was commanding Paul to do - and - this is exactly what Paul did.

I'm not going to repeat it, because I have already spent a lot of time on it. This is the Law concerning Nazarites as found in Numbers chapter 6. Numbers 6:1-2

[1] And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

[2] Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD:

This is absolutely James commanding Paul to keep the Law God gave Moses and Paul

did it.

These are the two of the most devout followers of Jesus Christ recorded in the Bible.

These are not lost men. These are followers of Jesus Christ. Two of the most devout, committed followers of Jesus Christ found in our Bibles. And they are keeping the Law God gave Moses - as recorded in Numbers 6 - then continuing in Numbers chapter 19.

We have to deal with this. And the way to deal with it is to understand that the Law God gave Moses was not a bad thing. *At least not yet.* At this time, keeping the Law God gave Moses was perfectly fine for those living in or very near Jerusalem because the temple was still in existence. And, as we also clearly see from this chapter, it was perfectly fine for Paul to have taught those outside of Jerusalem that it was perfectly fine for them to go ahead and forsake the Law God gave Moses entirely.

During this transition period - this vanishing of the Old and the establishing of the New - it was perfectly fine for the Law to co-exist - as long as it was in the Name of - in the Authority of Jesus Christ - it was perfectly fine for those living in Jerusalem to keep the Law and for those outside of Jerusalem not to keep the Law God gave Moses concerning baptisms, sacrifices, circumcisions, etc.

[23] Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

[24] Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; **but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.**

Are we talking about the Moral Law of God here? Absolutely not. They are talking about the Law God gave Moses and the text is clearly pointing to Numbers chapter 6 as the foundation. To deny this is to take this chapter and rip it out and say that it is wrong. That is a really bad thing to do.

After James and these other devout followers of Christ commanded Paul to obey Numbers 6, they then say this in verse 25:

[25] As touching the Gentiles which believe,

James says this. And this is how we know that the Law God gave Moses was still in effect in Jerusalem because the temple was still there.

Concerning those who are outside of Jerusalem which are believers in Christ, those living outside of Jerusalem who have embraced Jesus as the Christ,

we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

What does that mean? James is agreeing with Paul that those outside of Jerusalem do not have to keep the Law God gave Moses. They did not have access to the temple - like those Israelites who were still living in or very near to Jerusalem. That's what this is saying.

This is certainly NOT a “when in Rome thing” - but it absolutely IS - a “when in Jerusalem thing” keep the Law God gave Moses - **but** do it in the Name of - in the Authority of Jesus Christ. And it was specifically for that time period. The time of keeping the Law - even in Jerusalem - was coming to an end - but not yet. The temple was still there. Verse 26:

[26] Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

Do you want to know absolutely in detail what Paul was doing? Then go to Numbers 6 and will find the answers. You'll find out what the purifying was, what the days of purification were - it's all there in Numbers 6. This was Paul keeping the Law God gave Moses in order to win his lost brethren? James was one of the most devout followers of Christ ever to make the book. James did not need Paul to “win him to Christ.” The reality is, James actually corrected Paul.

What makes more sense? Paul correcting James? Or James correcting Paul? Well, at least at this point, the text clearly shows us that James corrected Paul - because Paul went right on got himself and the others who were with him - he got himself and the rest of them baptized - purified the flesh - so they could go into the temple - then they went right into the temple and sacrificed animals exactly the way the Law God gave Moses commanded concerning Nazarites who had taken vows - and the it comes right

from Numbers chapters 6 and 19.

Now watch what happens beginning in verse 27.

[27] And when the seven days [want to know the details of the 7 days? Go to Numbers 6 - it's all there IN THE LAW GOD GAVE MOSES] were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

These were Jews from Asia. These were not Jews from Jerusalem - neither were they Judahites from Jerusalem. I hope you caught that. I do that as much as I can. When referring to Judahites or Israelites living in or around Jerusalem who embraced Christ - I call them Judahites. When the text is talking about the unbelievers - I call them jews. So the jews that were not from Jerusalem - when they saw Paul in the temple - keeping the Law God gave Moses - they wanted to out him as an imposter - or faker - this is what they said.

[28] Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

[29] (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

[30] And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

[31] And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

In order to read the conclusion of the trouble Paul found himself in, read the next two chapters of Acts and you'll see how it ends.

These were most definitely eye-opening days for Paul - as they were for James and the rest of the believers who were **zealous of the Law God gave Moses** and who were attempting to keep the Law God gave Moses - but doing so in the Name of - in the Authority of Jesus Christ.

Obviously, obviously as can be, neither James, nor Paul, had either completely figured out the passing of the Old Covenant or the establishing of the New - because clearly - James had compelled Paul to keep the Law and to tell all the believers - all those

thousands who had accepted Christ - **after the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, after Christ had ascended to the throne** - James wanted Paul to tell all those believers that he walked orderly and **kept the Law God gave Moses**.

Again, why? Because the Old Covenant was in the final days of officially passing away - but it had not fully passed away - yet. The temple was still in existence. The Law was still in existence - but it was passing away. Once the temple came down - that was the official end of the Old Covenant age.

All the baptisms that appeared to have physical H₂O associated with them - all of them were Old Covenant baptisms.

They were required of all those living in or near Jerusalem. And, mainly what we see of those baptisms in the book of Acts - they were the cleansing baths that purified the flesh prior to entrance into the temple. And, as we saw Paul completing the Law God gave Moses concerning the Nazarite vows - Numbers 6 and Numbers 19 - which is what Paul was obeying - they have physical H₂O water cleansings - associated with them.

In closing, we have reexamined Acts 2:38. Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. That verse does not speak of H₂O water. It is speaking of becoming fully immersed, fully consumed by, fully into the Name - the Authority of Jesus Christ.

We looked at Matthew 28:19-20. Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the gospel, baptizing them in the Name of.

That is not physical H₂O water. Immersing them in the Name. Immersing them in the Authority. Teaching them to obey Christ. Teaching them to have their lives immersed into Christ.

There is no hocus pocus by saying a name. There have been lots of people with the name Jesus. Someone's name means nothing. The whole idea of saying the word "Jesus" and demons flee, sickness leaves, the dead rise - that is "church" garbage. It is not the word - it is the Authority found in the Word. It is living by the Authority of Jesus Christ. That's the difference.

The idea that baptizing in the name of means you dunk someone in physical H₂O water and say Jesus while you are doing it - that is "church" - that is something that has come from "church" - it is not Bible.

Baptizing in the Name of - means you are teaching people to observe the teachings of Christ - you are teaching someone to immerse themselves in the fact that Jesus Christ has All Power in heaven and earth - **now live like it.**

If a man has truly been immersed in the Name of - in the Authority of Jesus Christ - his life will reflect it.

That man will be - at the very least - trying to rid himself from the entanglements of the world - will try to rid himself of the citizenships of the world - will try to live as a Citizen of the Only God Ordained Government in the world since the Messiah came. That is evidence of being baptized in the Name of - being immersed into the Authority of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost does not mean you take someone to some physical H2O water - and pour it on them, dunk them in it, sprinkle it on them - and say the word Jesus. That is not what it means.

Sadly, for the millions and millions of people who have participated in this type of "church" ritual - they walk away from that ceremony thinking that everything is right. They are right with God. They are "saved." They are "covered by the blood" - and now - they are free to live - or should I say - continue to live - pretty much the exact same way they were living - with the exception of now - they are not allowed to say a cuss word, they are not allowed to smoke a cigarette - and they must go to "church" every Sunday and put money in the offering plate - there's another carry over from the Old Covenant Temple - offering.

Friends, I'm telling you, Old Covenant baptism did require physical H2O water in some circumstances. It did require physical animals to be sacrificed. It did require physical circumcision. And every time we see what looks like a physical application of any of those - whether it be in the book of Leviticus - or in the book of Acts - it is Old Covenant.

Our friend Paul sent us some more music this week. Stay with us for just a few more minutes this morning and listen to what Paul has prepared.