

Elementary Principles
or
The ABCs
Part 3

Hebrews 6:1-3

Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Messiah, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of **repentance from dead works** and of **faith toward God**, of **instruction about washings** and **laying on of hands**, and **the resurrection of the dead** and **aionial judgment**. And this we will do, if God permits.

Q: What are the “washings”?

βαπτισμῶν (pl.)
(*baptismon*)

#1 – The Traditional Christian View

- Done only once in a person’s lifetime.
- Each denomination and creed has its own unique ritual.
- Usually performed publicly.

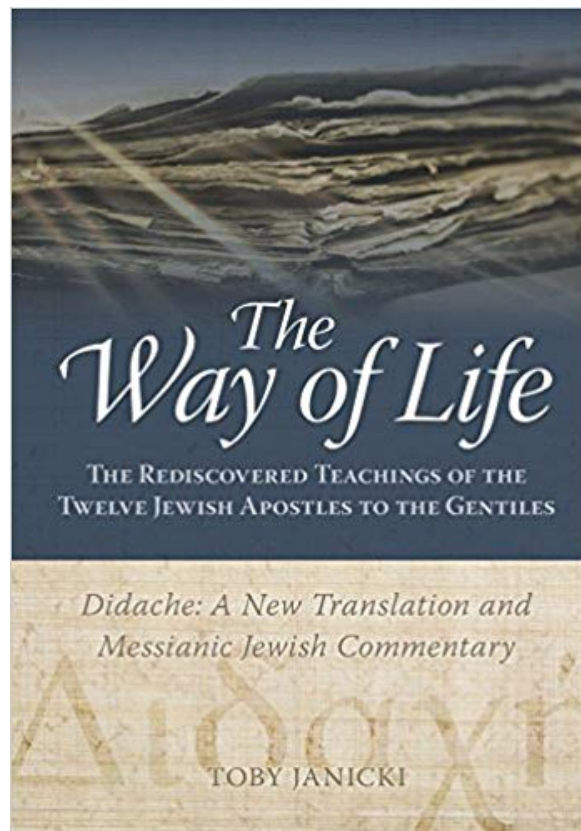
#2 – The Traditional Jewish View

- Done on multiple occasions during a person’s lifetime.
- Performed whenever a person passed from one stage of life to another:
 - Re-entering the community (after childbirth, *tzaraas*, etc.)
 - Before marriage
 - After a woman’s monthly cycle
 - Prior to Yom Kippur
 - Ascending to the Temple Mount
 - Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- Always performed privately in a *mikvah*.





#3 – The Apostles' teaching in the *Didache*



Do not forsake the commandments of the Lord, but keep what you have received, neither adding to nor subtracting from it. (4:13)

Your fast days should not coincide with those of the hypocrites, for they fast on the second day [Monday] and on the fifth day [Thursday]. But you are to fast on the fourth day [Wednesday] and the preparation day [Friday]. (8:1)

...But if he asks for money, he is a false prophet. (11:6)

If he does not have a skill, according to your discernment take into consideration how he will avoid living idly among you as a follower of the Messiah. But if he is not willing to do so, he is a Messiah peddler. Guard yourselves from people like this! (12:4-5)

Chapter 7. Concerning Immersion.

Concerning immersion, immerse in this way: Having first said all these things, immerse in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in living water. But if you do not have living water, immerse in other water; and if you cannot be immersed in cold water, then immerse in warm water. But if you do not have either in sufficient quantity to immerse, pour water on the head three times in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Prior to the immersion, the one performing the immersion and the one being immersed should fast beforehand, and also any others if they can. Require the one being immersed to fast one or two days prior to the immersion.

Q: What is the significance of the laying on of hands?

1. Bestowing blessings
2. Ritual substitution
3. Ordination

One should think of his immersion into Messiah as his signature on a contract.

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1 Timothy 5:22, 24-25

Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin...The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their *sins* follow after. Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.

Messianic Judaism is not in the business of inventing a new religion, and we are not interested in just playing dress-up Jewish or “let’s pretend.” In Messianic Judaism, we are doing the hard work of recovering authentic Christian practice – the faith and religion of the first followers of Jesus Christ.

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