

Book of Hebrews Part 21: Infant Baptism Versus Confessionary Baptism; Church History (2/23/019)

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57wBqc3YZ14> or <https://rumble.com/embed/vbcc0f/?pub=4>.

***Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliterate, English word. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.**

The last couple weeks we have been looking at the specific elementary principal of baptism. Today I want to look at something in regard to this concept that historically has been a brutal point of contention. I'm talking about infant baptism versus a confessionary baptism; two very different ideas and understandings regarding how we are supposed to fulfill God's command to become baptized.

One side says we need to do this as an infant. They say it is critical we baptize our children as infants or young children. The other side says this is reserved for someone who can confess the name of Yeshua and move on the conviction and understanding of what the death, burial, and resurrection of the LORD Yeshua is all about.

I'm going to tell you these sides have held so strongly to their conviction that one group, the infant baptism group, has historically been willing to kill the other group. Ironically, the other group has been willing to die for the conviction that baptism must be done by those who believe. Let that sink in before we even begin. We have Christians killing Christians over this elementary principal. The argument is not over whether or not we should be baptized; it is over whether or not we should be baptized as infants, adults, or get re-baptized as adults if we were baptized as an infant.

If we peel back the layers of church history, you'll find Roman Catholicism was not just a church in her glory, if you will. She was the power of the state. She became church and state and claimed the ultimate power.

To give you an example of this, we can look at the Anabaptists from the 16th century. These Anabaptists had been baptized as infants, but through the conviction of reading the word of God in the New Testament found they needed to get re-baptized. This is why they were called Anabaptists; means re-baptized. These people were hunted down by the Roman Catholics and charged with a criminal offense for being re-baptized. In the best case scenario, they would be put in prison. Most times, however, they would be beaten, tortured, burned at the stake, or beheaded. However the method, they were killed over this matter.

Today, Christianity is still divided on this issue even within the ranks of Protestantism. There are some who hold tightly to infant baptism claiming that is the truth. The others claim we need to confess Yeshua, which is the believer's baptism.

We are going to dig into these two sides. We're going to look at both confessionary baptism and infant baptism. What we need to know is which method we need to hold to. Knowing how strongly people held to these two sides in that they were willing to kill or be killed over this matter is going to be explored.

Before we get going, I want to point out how all of us can become complacent at some point in our life. There is a failure to recognize how the devil is moving against the church. His number one target is coming after the church, coming into the church, and perverting it. We get into the state of complacency and get comfortable saying, "You know I've been going to my church for 20, 30, or 40 years. Everything's fine. We know what we are doing." My question is, "How do you know?" Have you challenged the things you're practicing and participating in? Have they been challenged? And if they've been challenged, how? Are they challenged with your heart, with your emotions, or with the Word of God?

We need to remember what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:14—**Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.** In verse 15—**...his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness.** John warns us we are to test the spirits because **...many false prophets have gone out into the world** (1 John 4:1).

This is what we're to do especially when we come to the doctrine of this elementary principle of baptism. This is foundational to the faith. This is not a matter of, "Well, you know, you can do this or do that. Either is fine because we're both believers." No! This is not a 'potatoe verses potato' thing. This is life and death. You cannot mess with the elementary principles. This is the foundation of the faith.

With that said, I want to open up today by taking you to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. But before we get into it, I want you to know that as much as I have read and studied, this book is hands down, as a literary work, by far one of the most impressive, most magnificent literary works I've ever come upon. Every word is carefully penned with precision and articulation. It is unbelievable the care that was taken when writing this book.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is about why the Catholic Church does what it does. When you get to the end of the book, you will have an unbelievable understanding of the do's and don'ts and the ins and outs of Catholic beliefs. If you want to understand Catholicism you need to read this. I would add you need to understand Catholicism because you need to learn your church history. Those who do not know their history are doomed to repeat it. Amen!

The Catechism of the Catholic Church addresses the topic of infant baptism. This is what we read—**1250- Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called. The sheer gratuitousness [which means unwarranted] of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism. The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth** (emphasis added, The Catechism of the Catholic Church, *The Baptism of Infants*).

Now this is unambiguous. This is carefully penned. What it is saying is if a parent has a child born, and they don't baptize him or her right away, and they go a month, maybe two or three, and the child dies, that child is in jeopardy of losing its salvation.

The first thing I want you to appreciate, which they articulated, is their urgency and need for baptism. When you read this, it's coming through the page loudly. I appreciate that urgency. The problem I have is it's being applied to an infant. Why do I have a problem with that? I have a problem with that because an infant has no understanding of the gospel and infants cannot confess Yeshua as LORD. An infant cannot have that conviction, embrace that conviction, and turn in repentance to go into waters of hope. The infant can't feed itself. It can't do any of these things. This is problematic because Scripture is very clear regarding the fact these are requirements to entering into Yeshua's baptism.

Let me take you back to our last message for a reminder. Reading from Acts 8:36-37—³⁶ **Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized"** (emphasis added)? The eunuch wants to know what the requirements are. ³⁷Then Philip said, **"If you believe with all your heart, you may"** (emphasis added). This is where you get into the believer's baptism. You must believe; you have to have this component. However, it does not stop there. What is the eunuch response? He confesses—**And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"** (emphasis added).

There's confession. There is belief that is being embraced. It is at this point a person can go to those waters of hope, into baptism.

What does Paul say in Romans 10:9-10? ⁹...**if you confess with your mouth the LORD Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.** ¹⁰ **For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.** You need to understand there are requirements as we go into baptism. These requirements are something an infant cannot do.

Let me take it a step further. I want you to ponder something for a second. Are we in the habit of burying people alive? I ask the question because according to Paul in Romans 6, where he is very clear, baptism is about going into the death, into the burial, and being buried with Mashiah, with Christ, and rising up to resurrection where we are a new creation. It's all about being buried in His death. So again I ask: Are we in the custom of burying people alive? Who do we bury? We bury the dead. Why then are we burying infants who have not been slain by the Law? Is there a conviction that overwhelms them? Are they recognizing they are a sinner and need a savior?

It is not supposed to be like this. Children who are infants, and even young children, are in a state of innocence. They come under the protection of the parents.

Let me take you to the Torah and show you something it says in Deuteronomy 1:39 —³⁹**Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it** (emphasis added). The Torah recognizes they are in a state of innocence. They don't know the difference between right and wrong. They can't change their diapers, nor can they feed themselves. They rely upon their parents to do that. That is very important to remember.

Going back to the Catechism we read—**1252-The practice of infant Baptism is an immemorial [ancient] tradition of the Church.** Did you notice it does not say—the practice of infant baptism is an immemorial or ancient command of the Bible? It does not say that. It says it is—**an ancient tradition of the Church.**

Continuing—**There is explicit testimony to this practice from the second century on.** It doesn't say the first century. Why is that important? Because that would refer to the New Testament; that would refer to the Word of God. It refers to what men were doing later on after the apostolic generation. That's important to note.

Continuing on—**...and it is quite possible that from the beginning of the apostolic preaching, when whole "households" received baptism, infants may also have been baptized** (emphasis added).

Pay close attention to this paragraph because it is the justification being used for baptizing infants. Descriptors are being used like: 'are tradition of the church', 'quite possible', and 'may'. This is anything to me but compelling. This is frightening. I don't hang onto something as critical as this when it comes to Christians killing other Christians for this very act. I need to know where we stand. I need to know we stand on the Word of God. I need to know what the Apostles were preaching, teaching, and practicing, and not "maybe" or "it is possible." Add to that, to tell me this is tradition instead of biblical is not where we need to be. Amen?

Having said that, there's one thing I want to focus in on in all fairness. We need to look at this statement—**whole "households" received baptism.** You need to understand their supposed support for that statement comes from the New Testament; therefore, we're going to go to the New Testament to look at exactly what they're talking about. That way we can see if the New Testament says infants are to be baptized. I got to be honest with you, if the New Testament says this is a practice we're supposed to do, then we are done with the conversation because the New Testament declares it.

Let's go to these passages that it's referring to. The first passage is in Acts 16. The backdrop is Paul and Silas have been thrown into prison and at midnight they are singing hymns and praying to the LORD. All of the sudden there is an earthquake, and something interesting happens. All the chains of the prisoners fell off. It was not just Paul and Silas, but all the prisoners. It's an amazing thing. All the prisoners are set free. The jailer wakes up in the midst of this and is terrified because he's ready to take up his sword and kill himself because he would have been killed if the prisoners had escaped on his watch. Fortunately Paul says—**Do yourself no harm, for we are all here** (Acts 16:28). We continue in Acts 16:29-31—²⁹ **Then he [the jailer] called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ So they said, "Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."** This is what they were referring to in the Catholic Catechism— **you will be saved, you and your household.**

Moving on to verse 32—**Then they spoke the word of the LORD to him.** Keep in mind they're expressing the gospel. They're taking the time to explain what Yeshua did for them and the hope that is in them. They are also expressing the condemnation if they do not accept Yeshua, they're going to be judged and killed.

Starting again from the beginning of Acts 16:32-33—³² **Then they spoke the word of the LORD to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes** [You can see the power of God coming over him and love pouring out of him]. **And immediately...** (emphasis added). Do you remember in our last message one of the things we talked

about is the urgency? Everywhere you look there's urgency regarding being baptized. It says—
...immediately, he and all his family were baptized.

Now this is one of the passages that they are utilizing as proof for baptizing infants. We baptize infants because his whole family was baptized. Right? The first problem, however, is the text doesn't say there were infants in the jailer's household. It doesn't even say there were young children. You have to interpolate that into the text meaning you have to read that into the text. I get concerned when the only way I can justify my theological position is by reading words into a text that are not there. That is a huge concern. It should be for everyone.

Let me take you to another passage in 1 Corinthians 1:16 where we find the Apostle Paul saying—**Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.** This is another example that will be utilized to show infant baptism was clearly done. They claim Paul baptized infants. Again, it does not say that. You have to read that into the text.

Here is what's interesting. I'm going to take it a step further. There's a comment on this very event at the end of the Epistle. There's something interesting said there that absolutely does not allude to the fact infants or even young children, rather adults, were being baptized.

This is what we read in 1 Corinthians 15:16—**I urge you, brethren--you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints** (emphasis added). These people jumped into the ministry; these men jumped into ministry. This is not something an infant would typically do. This is not something even young children would do. If you are going to allude to anything, allude to the fact these were people of sound mind who could serve in the ministry. They made a conscious decision.

The bottom line is this. Go home and read the New Testament cover to cover. You will not find one single, solitary verse, not one, that shows an example of infant baptism. It doesn't exist. Take it a step further. You will not find one single instruction given to men that we are supposed to baptize infants. There is no command to do it. It doesn't exist anywhere in Scripture.

So where does this come from? Why has this been something that is so crystallized in Roman Catholicism, even boiled out into some Protestantism, as Protestantism was birthed out of Catholicism? For the answer, go back to the Catechism, and they tell us—**...the practice of infant Baptism is an immemorial tradition of the Church** (emphasis added). Not just that, but—**There is explicit testimony to this practice from the second century on** (emphasis added). Because of these things, the church has established this belief of infant baptism.

I want to show you some church history so that you have a backdrop as to where Roman Catholicism, and even Protestantism to some extent, is coming from. Why would they participate in this? Why would they embrace this ideology, and why have men been killing and dying for it?

I want to introduce you to Cyprian, or Bishop, of Carthage. It's important to note when he lived. He lived very early on at the turn of the third century (210-258 AD). This is very early in church history. The fact he is from Carthage is a point of interest. Do not forget this because we're going to come back to this the fact.

We have some of his writings, and one of the writings is to Fidus on the baptism of infants. I love that we have this recordation today. This is what Cyprian says—**But in respect of the case of the infants, which you say ought not to be baptized within the second or third day after their birth, and that the Law of ancient circumcision should be regarded, so that you think that one who is just born should not be baptized and sanctified within the eighth day, we all thought very differently in our council.**

The first thing you need to understand is this is not an infant baptism position against a believer's baptism. This is an in-house dispute all within the realm of the arena of infant baptism. They are pro infant baptism. What Cyprian is calling Fidus out because Fidus is studying Scripture and recognizes that the ancient tradition of Israel is they did not circumcise their children within the second or third day. They waited till the eighth day; therefore we should use that as a precedent and not baptize children until after the eighth day. We then have Cyprian's response which is to say he believes they should be baptized immediately.

The dialogue continues with Cyprian's words—**For in this course which you thought was to be taken, no one agreed; but we all rather judge that the mercy and grace of God is not to be refused to any one born of man. For as the LORD says in His Gospel, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them," as far as we can, we must strive that, if possible, no soul be lost** (emphasis added).

I highlighted this portion because he is quoting Scripture. It is important to note Cyprian's justification. His position to take Fidus down is that children need to be baptized immediately; they should not wait eight days. How does he try to justify his position? He goes to Scripture and quotes from Luke 9. This is where Yeshua went into a Samaritan Village and they rejected Him. James and John say to Yeshua—**Should we call down fire from heaven?** (Luke 9:54). Yeshua's response is found in part of Luke 9:56—**For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.**

That's the context, yet Cyprian is using this verse as his proof text to say you need to baptize your infant. Again, I get really concerned when we see this type of thing in our church history. Yet this is not something that is totally abnormal to the early church fathers. To show you this, I'll give you another example from Ignatius concerning condemning Christians.

Ignatius was condemning Christians who were observing the Sabbath. These Christians were actually resting on the Sabbath, and what does he do? He pulls out 2 Thessalonians 3:10, which says—**If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat**—and he applied that verse to Christians who were observing the Sabbath Commandment of God. He totally ripped it out of context, and what's funny is Paul's point was they were not working the six days. They were totally failing in this. This is what they were supposed to be doing; they were supposed to be working six days and observing the seventh as Sabbath, but Ignatius draws that Scripture totally out of context.

Be careful when you read the early church fathers because you will find this from time to time. Sometimes the early church fathers just wanted to be right so they would read their will into the word of God. Interpretation of Scripture has to be within the context of Scripture in its entirety. So this is of concern to me. Cyprian's proof of infant baptism that he is drawing out of Scripture had nothing to do with baptism, the act of it, and the point of when we should be doing it.

Let me introduce you to Origen from the same time period of the church. Here is what he has to say—

In the Church, baptism is given for the remission of sins, and, according to the usage of the Church, baptism is given even to infants. If there were nothing in infants which required the remission of sins and nothing in them pertinent to forgiveness, the grace of baptism would seem superfluous [pointless]."

In other words, what he is saying is if there is no reason to baptize them as infants, we wouldn't be doing it. Then he brings up the original sin concept to justify infant baptism. That is exactly what the Catechism was going through.

Why am I showing you this? I have shown you Cyprian and Origen because it is an absolute historical fact these men were practicing and teaching infant baptism. These are prominent men who have influenced the church dramatically.

Let me introduce you to another man names Augustine of Hippo. This theologian was a great philosopher who lived as we were moving into the fourth century, so we're seeing some continuance and consistency, if you will. Here is what Augustine said—*Even so, however, perhaps we must revert to the tenet which I mentioned just now, that infants ought to be baptized, because, although they are not sinners, they are yet not righteous. Even an infant, therefore, must be imbued with the sacrament of regeneration, **lest without it his would be an unhappy exit out of this life**; and this baptism is not administered except for the remission of sins* (emphasis added).

I highlighted this because this reverberates exactly what we read in the Catechism. It states if you do not baptize your child immediately and that child passes away before you baptize him, that child could be lost forever.

He continues—*And if any one seek for divine authority in this matter, though what is held by the whole Church, and that not as instituted by Councils, but as a matter of invariable custom, is rightly held to have been handed down by apostolic authority, still we can form a true conjecture of the value of the sacrament of baptism in the case of infants, **from the parallel of circumcision**, which was received by God's earlier people* (emphasis added).

Again, I highlighted this because you do need to understand one of the precedents for infant baptism Catholicism is standing on is circumcision. Now while there may be debate between Cyprian and Fidus that we are not supposed to take it hyper literally regarding waiting until the eight day, be assured there is a consistent consensus of utilizing circumcision as a precedent. In other words, you have to think it through in that the people of Israel were in the custom of circumcising their infants on the eighth day. That was the custom, so the church is saying they are going to do that with baptism.

So here is the problem with all of that. Circumcision is a mark in the flesh; baptism is a mark of the Spirit. It is spiritual; there is a circumcision of the heart. There's a conviction, a belief, a confession. They are two very different things. While we could talk about the parallels, these early church fathers are taking it to the literal status, and this is the cleverness of the evil one.

So we look at men like Cyprian, Origen, and Augustine. Cyprian was from Carthage. Origen from Alexandria, which is Egypt, and Augustine is from Hippo. All these areas are at the north point of the Roman Empire in Africa. They're all right next to each other, so you can see this idea is very condensed in that manner.

Here's what we're not told often times. There were other respected theologians, apologists, and scholars from the early church who fought against infant baptism. They're even mentioned in the Catechism, but not in that context. These are men like Tertullian who interestingly enough is from Carthage, and he lived before Cyprian. He came on the scene before the second century; Cyprian is from the turn of the third Century. Tertullian is second century, and we know that infant baptism was starting to creep into the church because Tertullian was an apologist who fought against it.

I want to read to you what Tertullian says—**And so, according to the circumstances and disposition, and even age, of each individual, the delay of baptism is preferable; principally, however, in the case of little children** (emphasis added). He could not be clearer in his statement.

What he's saying is we should delay baptism with our little children and our infants. What Tertullian understands is exactly what the Torah says. There's a time of innocence for these children. They know neither good nor bad. When you receive the baptism of the Messiah Yeshua, you have to know what bad is; it's you. It is the fact you failed; you sinned. We have to confess that in order to receive the baptism of Messiah Yeshua.

Moving on we find Tertullian saying—**The LORD does indeed say, “Forbid them not to come unto me.”** This is important. He's quoting Matthew 19. Why do I say this is important? Because this is one of the primary passages used today to prove we're supposed to be doing infant baptism. The context of Matthew 19 is people were bringing their children to Yeshua and the disciples were trying to prevent that from happening. Yeshua told them—**Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them** (Matthew 19:14).

Why were they bringing the little children to Yeshua? They were bringing them to Yeshua so He could lay hands on them. They were not bringing them to Yeshua to have Yeshua baptize them, but to lay hands on them. We are going to talk about the laying on of hands in the next lesson at which time we will probably circle back to this story. However, the intent of the parents was to have Yeshua lay hands on their children. This is a completely different situation, but this Scripture was being utilized in the second century to say, “This is what we need to do.”

So again we see how people come out and use Scripture, but they take it totally out of context. So we find Tertullian calling them out on it. This is what he says as we continue—**Let them “come,” then, while they are growing up, let them “come” while they are learning, while they are learning whither to come; let them become Christians when they have become able to know Christ. Why does the innocent period of life hasten to the “remission of sins”** (emphasis added)?

That is exactly what the Torah reveals to us. You see, you don't bury an infant alive until the Law has slain him. He continues—**Let them know how to “ask” for salvation, that you may seem (at least) to have given “to him that asketh.”** Tertullian is quoting Matthew 7:7 where it says—**Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.** That is a personal invitation for a personal relationship with the Messiah Yeshua which is extended to every one of us where we consciously make the decision.

Let me take this a step further. I want to go back before Tertullian, but I want to come after the New Testament to essentially the earliest Christian writing we have, which is the Didache. Most scholars attest this was actually written by the end of the first century; some say maybe early second century,

but this is as early as it gets. We've already looked at the Didache to some extent. I want to show you what it says in regard to baptism. This section we are focused on is very specific on giving instructions on baptism. This is what we read in Didache 7:1-3—¹ Now concerning baptism, baptize as follows: after you have reviewed all these things, baptize “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” in running water. ² But if you have no running water, then baptize in some other water; and if you are not able to baptize in cold water, then do so in warm. ³ But if you have neither, then pour water on the head three times “in the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit.”

So you look at this and see we are told to start with living water. If you can't find that, find this or that kind of water. What do you get from all of that? You get urgency. Whatever it takes, this person needs to get baptized in the name of the LORD even to the point if there's no water then according to this instruction you pour water three times on his head.

Continuing in Didache 7:4—⁴ And before the baptism, let the one baptizing and the one who is to be baptized fast, as well as any others who are able. Also, you must instruct the one who is to be baptized to fast for one or two days beforehand. Twice it is repeated. This is the most critical instruction we can give regarding those who are going to get baptized. They need to be fasting one to two days beforehand.

Now I ask you; is this something you would commonly do with children? Absolutely not! With infants? Absolutely not! In fact, what you would find traditionally is that even on Yom Kippur, children do not fast. Keep in mind Yom Kippur is an absolute mandatory day to fast, and the young children do not fast.

So you look at the earliest attestation, you look at Tertullian, who preceded Cyprian and is from that same area of Africa as Augustine and Origen, and you can see the devil working. There are contradictions and divisions, and the division continued until the point of death where all these people are being killed because they're getting re-baptized. A lot of these people who were getting killed had been baptized in the church as infants, but because they went and got re-baptized they were put to death.

I want to move forward to the 1900s. This is a commentary by Dr. A. S. Crapsey, formerly an Episcopal rector in Rochester. He made the following statement in the introduction to a sermon in defense of infant baptism. I am going to pause right here. If my memory serves me right, and I could be wrong so don't quote me, I think Dr. Crapsey's father was an attorney. Dr. Crapsey is going to give a message defending infant baptism. When you're read what we're about to read, you can realize it's a good thing he wasn't an attorney because this is not a good defense.

Given that, let's see what Dr. Crapsey has to say regarding infant baptism—Now in support of this custom of the church, we can bring no express command of the word of God, no certain warrant of holy Scripture, nor can we be at all sure that this usage prevailed during the apostolic age. From a few obscure hints we may conjecture that it did, but it is only conjecture after all. It is true St. Paul baptized the household of Stephanas, of Lydia, and of the jailor at Philippi, and in these households there may have been little children; but we do not know that there were, and these inferences form but a poor foundation upon which to base any doctrine. Better say at once, and boldly, **that infant baptism is not expressly taught in Holy Scripture** (emphasis added).

Do you get what he is saying? He is saying infant baptism is a moot point; therefore, having any more of a conversation about this is dead. He goes on and says—**Not only is the word of God silent on this subject, but those who have studied the subject tell us that Christian writers of the very first age say nothing about it. It is by no means sure that this custom obtained in the church earlier than in the middle of the second or the beginning of the third century.** That is an absolute fact; you saw it today. It's true.

Continuing—**Dr. C. M. Mead, in a private letter, dated May 27, 1895—“Though a Congregationalist, I cannot find any Scriptural authorization of pedobaptism.** Again, I show you this intentionally because these are people who are pro infant baptism, yet they find no support scripturally speaking. Again, this is where I have a problem.

This is why we need to be looking at this but that's not all that is said here. Look at what else he testifies to—... **and I admit also that immersion seems to have been the prevalent, if not the universal, form of baptism at the first** (Strong, A. H. (1907), *Systematic theology*, (p. 952)). Mikvah is what it is called. That baptism is called Mikvah.

There is other commentary which I'm not going to show you now, but it would blow your mind in regard to Roman Catholicism. With infant baptism, it's common that sprinkling of water on the head is the method. This is done because you are not going to fully immerse an infant in water. It goes hand in hand this sprinkling of water versus the immersion. So what this doctor said, and he's very specific, he tells us if you go all the way back, everything points to the fact it was always immersion. You can look at the history of the Jewish people in the first century and how they were practicing their faith. There is no question about it. They were immersed.

Let me take it a step further. All you need to do is go to the New Testament and look at the word for baptized. In the Greek it is βαπτίζω. It literally means—properly, "submerge"; hence, baptize, to immerse (literally, "dip under"); (baptizō) implies submersion ("immersion"),...

How is it we could move so far off the mark on something that is so critical to the faith? Again, I remind you the devil does not want us to do what God wants us to do. The devil's sole goal is to come and interrupt us from actually doing God's will.

There is one more thing I'm going to mention, and we need to go back to the elementary principles for this in Hebrews 6:1-2—**Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² of the doctrine of baptisms** (emphasis added). Why did I highlight this? Because there is a lot of discussion in regard to what the writer of Hebrews is talking about. There is discussion on this in the scholarly realm because the actual word used is in the plural. The word used is βαπτισμῶν (*baptismōn*), coming from the word βαπτισμός (*baptismos*). When you look at the definition of the word βαπτισμῶν (*baptismōn*), it means—From baptizo; ablution (ceremonial or Christian) -- baptism, washing.

Here's what's interesting. Where the discussion comes in is that this is a word that is being utilized regarding the washing of pitchers and cups. So is the writer of Hebrews actually referring to the baptism of Yeshua, or is he referring to some other baptisms that are more ritualistic such as the purification of cups, plates, and so forth? The answer to that is we can be for certain what is being talked about by the

context. The context is very clear. We are dealing with the elementary principles of the Messiah Yeshua, which are the very first things we need to possess when we come into the faith. We also know for fact baptism is one of them because that is the New Testament testimony.

We could take it a step further. It's interesting how the writer literally structures the elementary principles. What he does is take the six elementary principles and group them in three groups of two. The first is repentance and faith toward God. Those two go hand-in-hand. The next two go hand-in-hand; baptism and the laying on of hands. These two are connected, and how do we know that? We can read about this in Acts 19:4-6—⁴ Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." ⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the LORD Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had **laid hands on them**, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and **prophesied** (emphasis added).

You need to understand this is the expectation. The laying on of hands is something you would expect to see with someone going through baptism. So when the writer groups these two together, baptism and the laying on of hands, the broader and immediate context tell you what kind of baptisms we are talking about. We are talking about the Jew and Gentile coming in from all over the world receiving these baptisms, which is the baptism of the Messiah Yeshua.