

The Parking Garage Basement of Christianity:  
How Ceremonial Washings Lead to Christ  
*Hebrews 6:2*

Nutshell: Old Covenant ceremonial washings are *not* like a booster rocket that falls uselessly away when the payload (New Covenant) reaches orbit. They are like the basement parking garage of a building - one that provides the *only access* to the building (the New Testament). NT water baptism and Spirit baptism assume knowledge and proper carryover from OT ceremonial washings.

I. Context: The Hebrews' need for deeper instruction.

II. Text

Heb 6:2 of *the instruction about washings*, also of laying on of hands, also of *the resurrection of the dead* and of everlasting judgment,

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

- A. Paul wrote an inspired book to a Jewish audience; 2 Pet 3:15-16; 1 Pet 1:1; 2 Pet 3:1. Hebrews is the only possibility.
1. The "us" of Heb 2:3 only puts the author outside the original 12
  2. Peter speaks of the Apostles in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person as well, 1 Pet 1:12
- B. Outline of Hebrews

*Authority:* God has at last spoken In Son (*Ἰερωφῆτ*), ← follow this font  
His express image, 1:1-3a

*Theme:* **The SON** purified us from sin (Priest), then sat in authority (**King**), **1:3b**

I. Supreme over the angels, Inheritor by ordeal, 1:4-14  
Therefore hear Him, 2:1-4

II. Supreme as man, 2:5-9

**Psalm 8-** Since man must inherit, 2:5-8a  
but man failed, 2:8b, Christ became man, 2:9a

*Theme* reprise: crowned with glory and honor (King), 2:9b  
to taste the death of “each one” of His own (Priest), 2:9c  
to bond with them and help them, 2:10-18  
freeing them from bondage to Satan and fear, 2:14-15  
Therefore, think hard on Him, 3:1

III. A better stewardship than Moses, 3:1-6

Therefore hear Him, unhardening our hearts, (*Ἰερωφῆτ*)

**Ps 95-** for Moses’ folk didn’t inherit God’s rest, 3:7-19

IV. A better Rest than Joshua, 4:1-11

♦ Therefore, fear, 4:1a, lest we also miss God’s rest

**Ps 95-** David told his people not to miss that rest, 4:1b-3

The Promised Land was a type of God’s 7th day rest,  
which itself was a type of Salvation, 4:4-8

Christ’s Salvation has become the final *Sabbatismos*, 4:9,  
the Son resting from the work of Salvation as the  
Father had rested from the work of Creation, 4:10.

We must EXERT ourselves to enter Christ’s Rest, 4:11

For the Word penetrates, exposing us before God, 4:12-13

*Theme* reprise: Having the highest high priest (Priest), the  
Son of God (King),

Let us hold to our confession of Him (*Ἰερωφῆτ*), 4:14

especially since He felt all our temptations +, 4:15

**Kid-speak:** What three jobs did Jesus have? (P, P, and K)  
Prophet, Priest, and King.

V. A better priesthood than Aaron, 4:14 - 10:18

VI. Exhortations based on Christ’s supremacies, 10:19-13:21

VII. Concluding remarks, 13:22-25

C. “**Let us approach**” (Προσερχώμεθα) in 4:16 and 10:22

brackets the material between them

1. The material between = proofs of the superiority of  
Jesus’ priesthood (the bulk of the book)

2. The “let us approach” outside the brackets say that the  
*point* of Jesus’ priesthood is for us to approach God

3. Prayerlessness, then, is a dismissal of Jesus’ priesthood

D. 5:1-10, OT priests from Aaron; Christ from *Melchizedek*

1. 5:11-14, The Hebrews were too babyish to learn of *Ἰερωφῆτ*

2. 6:1, They needed to move on from foundational teaching:

a. First pair: repentance (mental transformation) from

- lifeless efforts: *not* trusting *my* doings + faith toward  
 God: trusting *Christ's* doings
- b. Next item: Cleansings (today)

**Kid-speak:** Last time, we looked at two things that always happen when Jesus saves us. First, we turn away from trusting ourselves, then we start trusting only God. What are the two words for those? Repentance and faith.

- E. 6:2, “Instruction” *didache*, 30x; verb form, *didasko*, Heb 5:12
1. Most commentators take “instruction” as the heading for the next four items: washings, hand-laying, resurrection, and judgment. That works grammatically.
  2. Repentance + Faith is a pair called a “foundation” in 6:1.
  3. So we have two “Foundation” pieces and four “Instruction” items. What’s the difference?
    - a. Repentance + Faith describe the *act* of God saving us
    - b. Washings → Judgment are the teachings about what happens *after* God saves us.
  4. The 4 “Teachings” tell us *where* our conversion is taking us
    - a. Repentance + Faith, then, have to be a settled matter
    - b. Washing → Judgment, as teachings, allow us to see if we received Repentance + Faith properly

**Kid-speak:** Can we be a Christian without being taught? No. Especially, God has to teach us. But does He tell us to study and learn? Yes. Does He tell us to listen and learn? Yes.

- F. “Of the teaching about washings”
1. “Washings” is the first essential “instruction” Paul focuses on. Odd (we say). This may take some mental adjustment.
  2. “Washings,” baptismos, 3x, \* Mk 7:4; our v; Heb 9:10
    - a. This is not the normal word for baptism. That’s baptisma, 19x. Verb, *baptizo*, 77x.
    - b. They are all based on *bapto*, to dip, 4x
  - \*3. A manuscript note on Col 2:12
    - a. Alexandrian MSS have a good case for *baptismos* here. Byzantine have *baptisma*- regular baptism.
    - b. *Baptismos* makes good sense in the Colossians’ context of OT ceremonial observances, 2:14, 21
    - c. *Baptismos* in Col 2:12 would make it easier to correlate

- OC washings with NC baptism, since it would obviously refer to Christian baptism (though of the Spirit)
- \* d. BUT Mk 7:4 makes a sufficient correlation itself
    - e. [Are *sabbatismos*, 4:9, and *baptismos* a pair?]
  - G. Mk 7:4. All Jews, following the Pharisees, “baptized” (*baptizo*) themselves returning from the market, similar to their “washings” (*baptismos*) of cups, etc.
    1. The Jews treated the marketplace as a (potential) ceremonial defilement, so they dipped (*baptizo*) themselves afterwards, per OC directions (coming shortly)
      - a. But God never said to do that, Mk 7:9
      - b. In fact, Lev 4:22-23; 28; 5:15 all indicate that truly unconscious sins (touched what I didn’t know was unclean) were not accountable unless they came to light
      - c. The Pharisees were trying to play it safe, but it created a wrong kind of separation, suspicion, and arrogance

**Kid-speak:** What kinds of things did the Jews wash? Themselves, cups, plates, and other stuff like that. They were supposed to do some of that, but what were they mainly supposed to **wash**, same as us? Their **hearts!** What’s the one thing God must give to wash our hearts? Jesus’ blood.

2. Importantly for our v, Jesus also used *baptismos* for the “washing” of cups, etc.
  - a. So there is a definite tie between *baptizo* and *baptismos*
  - b. In Mk 7:4, *baptizo* is a verb- what they *did*. *Baptismos* is a noun: hence, perhaps a more *overall* designation of their dippings and washings
  - c. That would work well in our v, *baptismos* being the broader word, with *baptisma* and *baptizo* viewed as kinds of *baptismos*
- ◆ 3. Hence, *baptismos* has a special connection to the OT roots of the practice, **baptisma/ baptizo** spring from it as the common words for Christian baptism (water *or* Spirit)
4. When Jewish converts were “taught” about Christian baptism, the OC practices would have been natural tie-ins
  - ★ a. The Jews had a huge backlog of knowledge and practice of “washings” that had thoroughly and continually impacted their lives
  - ☞ b. Paul calls all that context into view with the word

*baptismos*

☞☞☞c. But the connections to *baptisma* and *baptizo* are also completely clear

5. This is one great benefit of Hebrews for Gentiles. It gives us some *summaries* of OC practices, calling our attention to their fuller descriptions in the OT.
  - a. God designed the OC to picture the NC.
  - b. Here, then, are some OT details on “washings.”

**Kid-speak:** Is everything we need to know about baptism in the New Testament? No, a lot of it is in the Old Testament. If I asked you to, could you show me the OT in your Bible?

H. OT FOUNDATIONAL teaching on Washings. Washing #1.

1. There were two main words for washings in the OT
2. One of them, *rachats*, mainly referred to washing oneself, but was also used of the priests’ initial consecratory washing, Exod 29:4; 40:12; Lev 8:6 (All the same event)
  - a. And of priestly washing at the bronze laver
  - b. Of washing sacrificial body parts, Lev 1:9, 13, etc.
  - c. Of the body-bathing (but no dipping necessarily implied?) of a cleansed leper, Lev 14, and of someone emission-defiled, Lev 15 (+ clothes-washing, below)
  - d. Of the priests’ washing on the Day of Atonement, Lev 16

**Kid-speak:** What did the Jews have to do a lot in the Old Testament? Wash things!

I. OT FOUNDATIONAL teaching on Washings. Washing #2, *kavas*:

Intro

1. The other OT word for washing is *kavas*
2. The first reference to a ceremonial washing is Exod 19:10, 14. This was in preparation for God’s presence on Sinai 3 days hence.
  - a. We assume that the people had a notion of the symbolic significance of this washing, *and* that it didn’t have any pertinent physical effect.
  - b. A similar mentality already existed in their history *without* washing, Gen 35:2
3. There was also a larger picture of washing in the **Flood**
  - a. Peter makes that connection, 1 Pet 3:20-21

- b. Christian baptism is the washing of a conscience that has embraced Christ's death and resurrection
  - c. The Flood was water that lifted Noah away from judgment to safety, 1 Pet 4:1-2
4. Lev 6:27 has a priestly application of washing

**Kid-speak:** How was the Flood like a washing? It washed the world from all the sin people were doing.

J. OT FOUNDATIONAL teaching on Washings. *kavas*: Animal-related: **What we touch**

1. Some *direct* 'ancestors' of Christian baptism begin in Leviticus 11 with ANIMAL-related washing
2. Lev 11:25 is first,
  - a. but notice that Lev 11:24 describes a wash-free cleansing from ceremonial defilement, just separation + passage of time. This was for *touching* an unclean creepy crawler.
  - b. But *carrying* the unclean crawler required immediate clothes washing (apparently dipping oneself in water) + separation until sundown, Lev 11:25
3. Carrying the other land-animal carcasses also required this clothes washing, Lev 11:28
4. There was a different cleansing for non-clay (v 33) vessels, tools, or clothes on which bug carcasses fell. Just put it *in* water, then separate it until evening, Lev 11:32.
5. A water *source* was defilement-proof, Lev 11:36
6. An otherwise clean animal that died on its own would confer defilement, requiring the clothes-washing routine, 11:40
7. We need cleansing from mere *contact* with spiritual death (sin). Baptism pictures our soul's cleansing by our *contact* with Christ's death.

**Kid-speak:** If the Jews carried a dead thing, what did they have to do? Wash their clothes and not touch anybody until the sun went down. Was that because dead things have germs? No, God was teaching them to stay away from **spiritual death**- stuff that keeps us away from Him: **sin**.

K. OT FOUNDATIONAL teaching on Washings. *kavas*: Of 'LEPROSY': 3 kinds, Lev 13-14, **Our coverings**

1. Their skin ‘leprosy’ was *not* our modern leprosy
    - a. Non-contagious, for one thing, Lev 13:13
    - b. Plus garments and houses could have it too
  2. After a 14-day quarantine, ‘false-alarm’ leprosy required clothes-washing, Lev 13:6, 34
    - a. What spiritual uncleanness did that represent?
    - b. Gill says simply having been isolated under examination-*social* rather than *personal* responsibility, perhaps somewhat similar to Jn 13:10
  3. Garment leprosy. No further ‘leprosy’ (mold?) after a 1st washing → 2nd washing. Otherwise, burn it. Jude 23.
  4. A healed (“cleansed”) leper had to wash his clothes (*and* bathe himself), Lev 14:8-9
  5. House leprosy (mold?). Someone who had reclined in the house had to wash their clothes, Lev 14:47
  6. Sin is **tight** like our skin, **chosen** like our clothes, and **dwelt in** like our houses. Baptism pictures our washing from these defilements by our union with Christ’s cleansing death.
- L. OT FOUNDATIONAL teaching on Washings. *kavas*: Emissions: **What comes from within us**
1. This required washing clothes and affected items
  2. (Coupled with body-washing, *rachats*), v 5-9, 10-11, 13...
  3. We are poisonous. Our sin **stains** what is around us. We are spitting cobras, spraying and biting. Baptism pictures our immersion into Christ, purifying us within and without.

**Kid-speak:** If our body was our spirit, would we just have to wash our hands to be clean? Add our face? Add our body? Nope, it would include everything that went INTO and came OUT of us! *Would you say we need a lot of cleaning?*

- M. John the baptizer had connected all these washings to a **definite spiritual meaning**: turning from sin/ cleansing one’s soul. The Jews immediately adapted to it. The adaptation was *designed*.
1. Jesus carried on the same type of baptism
  2. The Apostles in Acts carried on the same kind
  3. Baptism was specifically related to the Spirit, Lk 3:16; Acts 1:5; 1 Cor 12:13. The Spirit is the one who applies the benefits of the Cross to us, joining us to Christ, 1 Cor 6:11; Titus 3:5.
  4. “Baptism” even describes the Cross, Lk 12:50

5. Our Christian baptism includes all of those
- N. The Jews were *not* at a *disadvantage* from having so much washing info and practice. It was all info *God* had attached to baptism and spiritual cleansing.
  1. We are at a disadvantage without OT “teaching about washings.” Paul counts it as a “primary element,” Heb 5:11.
  2. The Jews knew the spiritual connections
    - a. *Rachats*: Ezek 16:9; Isa 1:16; 4:4; Prov 30:12
    - b. *Kavas*: Ps 51:2, 7; Jer 4:14
  3. Without such grounding, Christian baptism can be thinned down to a mere initiatory rite. Joining a club.
    - a. It is, of course, more than that, even with only NT info
    - b. But it is *much* more than that with its full, rightly-attached OT body of knowledge

**Kid-speak:** Do we need what the Old Testament says to understand baptism? Yes.

V. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, “Uphold the strengthless”) God builds us back from the ground up.

VI. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, “Convince, rebuke”): **What have I done wrong?**  
**How have I lost righteousness?**  
 Have I left baptism as a thinned out shell?

VII. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, “Exhort/encourage”):  
**How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?**  
 I will see in baptism my confession of cleansing.

VIII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How do I take this on the road?**  
 I will remember my baptism and bring its inner purification into my walk day by day.

Wrap-up: NT baptism is permanently linked to repentance. The use of water clearly ties it to cleansing. As 1 Pet 3:21 teaches, though, the actual ‘fountain’ cleansing us is Christ’s death, the effectiveness of which is witnessed to us by His resurrection.  
 Are we carrying out the follow-on of 1 Pet 4:1-2?