

LifeSavers Bible Studies

#16: New Beginnings

Have you ever wished you could go back and relive portions of your life? Perhaps years ago you said or did something that still causes someone pain. Or, maybe you just wasted a lot of good years trying to find your place. Wouldn't it be great if you could start all over?

Baptism is God's answer to our desire for a fresh start. Even though we can't turn back the hands of time, God gives us a symbol of hope. While on earth, Christ used the simple rite of being immersed with water to illustrate the beauty of spiritual cleansing and renewal. It also signifies an important milestone in our lives.

In this, our last lesson, let's see what Scripture says about baptism.

Check one answer for each question:

I. Baptism

1. We become members of Christ's body through baptism.

1 Corinthians 12:13: TRUE FALSE

2. Baptism symbolizes our acceptance of Jesus Christ and of His work in our hearts (cleansing us from sin).

Acts 2:38; 22:16: TRUE FALSE

3. The water used in baptism has magical powers to erase sin and guilt.

1 John 1:7: TRUE FALSE

4. If we neglect to receive Christ's offer of grace, we will eventually perish and be lost.

John 3:14-16: TRUE FALSE

5. Believing in Jesus and being baptized into His body is critical to our salvation.

Mark 16:16: TRUE FALSE

6. Baptism symbolizes death to sin and our resurrection to a new life in Christ.

Romans 6:1-11: TRUE FALSE

Baptism is the Biblical celebration of Christ's death, burial and resurrection and is a fitting response for our faith when we make the decision to die to self and begin living for Christ. To be completely immersed under the water (which is the literal meaning of the Greek word "*baptizo*") not only simulates a death and burial experience, but represents the resurrection to a new life.

Wherein the new Christian has chosen to live their born again life as if they were dead, or unresponsive to their past sinful life, they are now very much alive in Christ (Romans 6:11).

7. Through His example Christ opened the way for any form of baptism to be used (sprinkling, with rose petals, half immersions).

Mark 1:9-10: TRUE FALSE

The only authentic baptism is by immersion. While other forms may be convenient and may even carry special meaning, they fail to convey the thorough cleansing symbolized by complete immersion.

8. John the Baptist chose a particular site on the Jordan River to conduct baptisms because of the abundance of water.

John 3:23: TRUE FALSE

There would be no need for "much water" if he had been sprinkling or pouring water on the baptismal candidates.

9. Philip followed the authentic mode of baptism by immersion.

Acts 8:36-39: TRUE FALSE

10. According to Scripture, there is only one mode of baptism?

Ephesians 4:4-6: TRUE FALSE

Baptism by sprinkling was not introduced into the church until the 4th Century A.D. Before that time the primary practice was by immersion. Gradually, a new method crept in. Cardinal Gibbons writes, "Since the twelfth century, the practice of baptism by infusion [pouring] has *prevailed* in the [Roman] Catholic Church, as this manner is attended with less inconvenience than baptism by immersion.... The Church exercises her discretion in adapting the most convenient mode, according to the circumstances of time and place." (*Faith of Our Fathers* (94th ed.), 277, emphasis supplied.) Many Protestant churches have adopted this method as well.

11. According to Jesus, individuals should understand His basic teachings before being baptized.

Matthew 28:19-20: TRUE FALSE

Inasmuch as baptism signified a commitment that people are making to Christ and His body, the church, they should be instructed about the plan of salvation and other biblical teachings so they will know what a church teaches before becoming a part of it. Mark records that Jesus said a person should believe and then be baptized (Mark 16:15-16).

This excludes the baptism of infants because they have no capacity to understand or believe. No one can make this choice for another, and there is nothing magical or holy about the substance of the water that can save a person. Parents can feel secure that their innocent child is safe in the loving arms of Jesus until that point in life when they become accountable and make their own choice to accept or reject Christ.

Jesus showed His care and compassion for the children by laying His hands upon them in blessing. He said that unless we become like little children in simple faith we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 18:3). As a child, Jesus was brought by His parents into the temple to be dedicated to God. Some churches follow this example with their children.

12. Since baptism symbolizes a new life, repentance should precede baptism.

Acts 2:38: TRUE FALSE

Repentance means sorrow for sin and turning away from sins. Only God's goodness and kindness can lead us to repentance. Therefore, sorrow for sin and the ability to turn away from it are gifts from God. We, in our own strength, are unable even to repent (see Romans 2:4).

13. If baptism represents the washing away of sins, Jesus' baptism indicates He must have sinned.

Matthew 3:13-15: TRUE FALSE

Since Jesus lived a sinless life He had no need to repent as we do. Yet, because He is our example in all things, He needed to fulfil, or follow, the same pathway to righteousness that each of us must follow. Jesus lived His life as we do and has, Himself, taken all the steps He asks of us.

14. Paul says everyone who is baptized has "put on Christ."

Galatians 3:27: TRUE FALSE

15. A public baptism fulfils one of Christ's requirements of us.

Matthew 10:32-33: TRUE FALSE

16. Thousands responded to Peter's sermon by asking, "what shall we do?" Peter told them to "repent and be baptized."

Acts 2:37-39: TRUE FALSE

This invitation was not only for them, but for everyone who was to live "far off" in the future. *"Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake His way, and the unrighteous man His thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."* Isaiah 55:6-7.

Do you sense that God is calling you to accept Jesus as your Saviour and follow His example by being baptized? Your baptism will not only seal your testimony through a public expression of your faith, but will also affiliate you with a Church that affirms and teaches the truths that you have been studying in this series.

17. I would like to meet someone who believes what I've been studying and get to know more about the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

TRUE FALSE

II. Life after Baptism

18. After baptism, temptations and trials are still to be expected.

Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 4:1; 1 Corinthians 10:13: TRUE FALSE

Baptism doesn't mean that you won't be tempted or even sin again. Even Jesus was tempted immediately after His baptism (See Matthew 3:16-17; 4:1). Don't be surprised or become discouraged if temptations seem even larger than before. Satan doesn't like to let us go that easily.

19. Jesus promises to help everyone who resists Satan and says no to temptation.

James 4:7-8: TRUE FALSE

Even though we may choose to resist the devil, that alone will not protect us unless we submit to God and draw near to Him. Submission means to give in to His will. When we do that, Christ, who has promised to present us as victorious to His Father, becomes the source of our strength (Read Jude 24-25).

We are not faultless or blameless, but He is. Because we have accepted Him as our personal Saviour and confessed our dependence upon Him, His life stands in place of ours when we appear before God (Romans 4:7-8). Jesus does not want us to continue living like sinners, but when we do fall, He promises that *"we have an Advocate [a Defender] with the Father, [Who is] Jesus Christ the Righteous One"* (1 John 2:1). Belief in this fact brings great peace to our hearts (Romans 5:1).

III. A Special Time to Remember

20. Christ established a special service called the Last Supper to remind us of His work in our behalf.

John 13:3-11: TRUE FALSE

The disciples accepted Christ and were probably baptized by John the Baptist. But during their time with Christ they had often displayed a lack of faith and had committed various sins. By washing their feet, Jesus instituted a service that carries the imagery of baptism and provides for spiritual renewal for those who are walking daily with Him.

21. Jesus primarily washed His disciples' feet because they were dirty.

John 13:12-17: TRUE FALSE

The symbolism in foot washing teaches the need for a continued relationship with Jesus and also gives us an opportunity to reinforce an attitude of humility toward our fellow man. The Apostle Paul says, *"Have this attitude in you which was also in Christ Jesus...who emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant... [He] humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death."* Philippians 2:5-8. For this reason the foot washing service is often referred to as "the Ordinance of Humility."

IV. Jesus says, "Remember Me"

22. Jesus used the emblems of bread and wine to represent His pure life and unblemished sacrifice.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26: TRUE FALSE

The Communion Service (a simple memorial of Christ's life, death and resurrection) symbolizes God's total commitment to save us by giving Jesus to humanity for all time. Since God gave all that heaven could give in the gift of Jesus, this service reminds us how valuable we are in God's sight.

23. Jesus uses the Communion Service to direct our minds to a future time when He will be with us in person.

Matthew 26:26-29: TRUE FALSE

Scripture does not indicate how often this service should be observed. It only says, *"as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."* (1 Corinthians 11:26). Seventh-day Adventists celebrate the Communion Service four times a year; not so often that its significance becomes a lifeless routine, yet often enough that His sacrifice for us is readily remembered. It is a service that Christ gave to every Christian and, as such, Christians of any denomination are welcome to share the emblems of His sacrifice with us.

24. I look forward to participating in a communion service in the near future.

YES NO

www.biblebay.org © 2001-04, Westlake Village, CA 91359