

Making a New Start

Lesson 16

Final words are extremely important. Parting words are usually significant. Picture a family gathered around a hospital bed eagerly trying to catch every word of a dying loved one. Last words make a difference.

Christ's last words were some of the most significant He ever uttered. His final command to His disciples was, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19, 20, NKJV).*

Christ commissioned His disciples to instruct people in the principles of the Christian life. When they accepted the claims of His love and became disciples, the sign of their allegiance to a new life was baptism.

The subject of baptism does raise many questions. How important is Bible baptism? Is baptism essential to our salvation? Does it make any difference how a person is baptized? How many kinds of baptism are there? Are sprinkling, pouring, and immersion all the same? Our lesson today answers these questions directly from the Bible.

1. How important is baptism?

Mark 16:16 _____

2. What did Jesus say to Nicodemus regarding the significance of baptism? John 3:5

John 3:5 _____

Baptism is much more than a lifeless ritual. It is a deeply spiritual symbol of complete, total commitment to Christ the burial of the old life and resurrection to new life in Christ.

3. How many methods of baptism does the Bible recognize? Ephesians 4:5

Ephesians 4:5 _____

There is one Lord, the Savior Jesus Christ. There is one faith, true Bible religion. There is one true method of Bible baptism.

4. How was Jesus baptized? Mark 1:9, 10

Mark 1:9, 10 _____

It is clear that Jesus was fully immersed by John in the Jordan River. John's gospel states that John was baptizing in the Jordan River because there was much water there (John 3:23). Full immersion is the only method of baptism described in the Bible.

5. How did Philip baptize the Ethiopian eunuch? Acts 8:38

Acts 8:38 _____

Both Philip and the Ethiopian entered the water. Philip then placed the Ethiopian completely under the water. To symbolize death to the old man of sin, burial with Christ, and resurrection in Christ to a new life, the candidate must enter into the water, be completely covered by the water, and rise from the water. Baptism by immersion is the only biblical method.

6. When Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River, what two significant things happened?

Matthew 3:16, 17 _____

When Jesus was baptized, the Spirit of God descended upon Him, giving Him strength for the temptations to come. His Father spoke these words from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). When people are baptized today, God gives them new power for living and the assurance they are pleasing Him.

7. Does God give us a greater indwelling of His Holy Spirit to strengthen us at our baptism?

Acts 2:38-39 _____

8. What assurance regarding our past does Jesus give us at our baptism?

Colossians 2:12 _____

Acts 22:16 _____

Baptism is a symbol of spiritual cleansing. The water of baptism itself does not save us, but it does signify we accept the blood of Christ, which does save us.

9. What are the conditions God desires us to meet before baptism?

a. Acts 2:38 _____

Repentance is a deep sorrow for sin. It means a conscious desire to turn from those things that violate God 's will and sadden His heart.

b. Acts 8:36, 37 _____

This belief is more than simply an intellectual assent to a particular creed. It is a heart commitment to Jesus and His Word. It is a turning to Him with all the heart, a belief that He is the Savior, who alone can forgive sin and give victory in my life.

c. Matthew 28:20 _____

Although learning is a lifelong process and one should never wait until they feel they have grasped all truth before baptism, it is necessary to understand basic scriptural truths before making such a significant decision.

10. What is the spiritual significance of baptism?

Romans 6:3, 4 _____

Baptism symbolizes a death to sin and a resurrection to a new life in Jesus Christ. Living for Jesus we are fully alive. Baptism by full immersion is the true symbol that we accept the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord. Through baptism we now acknowledge we are walking in the newness of life.

11. Baptism is a symbol of commitment to Christ. Does it also signify commitment to Christ's church?

Acts 2:41, 42, 47 _____

1 Corinthians 12:13, 27, 28 (first part) _____

Baptism in the New Testament was into the body of Christ, or the church.

12. If a person has been baptized once, should they ever be baptized again?

Acts 19:1-5 _____

In this instance Paul re-baptized believers who had been baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, but who had never heard of the Holy Spirit. As the truth about New Testament Christianity dawned upon their minds, they were re-baptized as a symbol of following all of this new truth. There are some Christians who have a new deep experience with Jesus as they discover new truths in the plan of salvation. They desire to become part of Christ's church and choose to be re-baptized.

13. What gracious, loving invitation does Jesus give us to accept the salvation He so freely offers?

Revelation 22:17 _____

Jesus invites us to come to Him. Baptism is a symbol we are accepting without reservation. We are accepting completely. We are accepting in total surrender to His will. As we come to Him, He promises to cleanse us from our past and give us a new life. We become part of His family, the church. Have you been baptized by immersion? Do you have the assurance your guilt is completely gone? Is your past buried? Are you new in Christ? Why not make this decision now?

In the Light of God's Word...

I understand that baptism is a sign of dying to the old sinful life, being buried with Christ in baptism, and rising to newness of life with Jesus. I understand that baptism by immersion is the method which is taught in scripture.

Additional comments:

Name: _____

Next Lesson: How to Spot a Fake