



MINISTÈRE DU PASTEUR CLÉMENT SALOMON · BIBLE STUDY #9

Baptism: A Brand-New Beginning

A funeral and a birthday, in the same moment

Early morning at the river. A young man is bent over a flat stone, scrubbing the same shirt for the third time. He rubs. He rinses. He holds it up to the light. The stain is still there. He scrubs harder, until his knuckles hurt and the cloth starts to give way at the shoulder. His mother watches him from the bank for a long minute. Then she says, gently, "Son. Some stains don't come out. You don't need a cleaner shirt. You need a new one."

He sits back on his heels with the wet shirt in his hands, and he doesn't answer. Because they both know they stopped talking about a shirt a while ago.

Maybe you know that feeling. There is something in your past you have scrubbed at for years — a night you can't take back, a word you can't unsay, a habit that keeps coming home with you. You have promised yourself, promised God, started over on Monday, started over in January. And the stain is still there.

Here is the good news of this study, and it is better than you think. **God is not offering you a stronger soap. He is offering you a whole new life.** And He has given us a beautiful, simple way to step into it — one that Jesus Himself walked into, in a river, on an ordinary day.

The day Jesus stood in the water

Before Jesus preached one sermon or healed one sick person, He walked to the Jordan River and asked to be baptized. John, the preacher standing in the water, tried to stop Him. *You should be baptizing me*, he said. Jesus answered:

"Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

Matthew 3:15 (KJV)

Think about that. Jesus had nothing to repent of. He had no stain. So why did He go into the water? Because He was not standing there for Himself. He was standing there *for us* — stepping into our place, taking our side, starting where He would ask us to start.

And then heaven answered:

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Matthew 3:16-17 (KJV)

Three things happened in one moment: the water, the Spirit, and the Father's voice. Hold on to that picture — because in Christ, those same three things belong to everyone who comes. The Father is not looking for a reason to reject you. He is looking for you.

What baptism actually is: a funeral and a resurrection

People often think baptism is a bath. It is not. The Bible calls it a **burial**.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Romans 6:3-4 (KJV)

Read that slowly. Baptism is a funeral for the old life. You go down into the water the way a body goes into a grave — and that old life, the one you could never scrub clean, is left there with Jesus.

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Romans 6:6 (KJV)

And then you come up. That part is not a funeral at all. That part is a birthday.

"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

Colossians 2:12 (KJV)

Notice who does the raising: **God does**. The same power that lifted Jesus out of the tomb is the power that lifts you out of that water. You are not promising to be strong enough. You are trusting Someone who already proved He is.

That is why the apostle Paul could write the sentence that has given hope to millions of people who thought they were finished:

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV)

Why we go all the way under

Someone always asks: does it really matter how much water? Look at how the Bible describes it, and let the Book answer.

The Greek word the New Testament uses, *baptizo*, means to dip, to plunge, to immerse — to put something completely under. And every picture in Scripture matches that meaning:

- **They chose places with deep water.** "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there" (John 3:23). You do not need much water to sprinkle.
- **They went down in, and came up out.** "And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (Acts 8:38). Of Jesus: "straightway coming up out of the water" (Mark 1:10).
- **It is a burial.** "We are buried with him by baptism" (Romans 6:4). We do not bury someone by sprinkling a little earth on their forehead. We lay them all the way down.

So the form is not a rule to make life difficult. The form is the message. Going under says *the old life is over*. Coming up says *Jesus gave me a new one*. Change the picture and you lose the sermon the water is preaching.

The order Jesus gave

Jesus' last command before He went back to heaven was not complicated. It has a clear order, and the order matters:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Matthew 28:19-20 (KJV)

First **teach**. Then **baptize**. Then **keep teaching**. Baptism sits in the middle of a life of learning Jesus — not at the beginning of a religion and not at the end of a course. The apostles followed exactly that pattern:

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Acts 2:38 (KJV)

So the steps are simple enough for a child and deep enough for a lifetime: **hear** the good news, **believe** it, **turn** from the old road, **be baptized**, and **keep walking with Jesus**. When Philip met a foreign official reading the Bible in his chariot, that is exactly what happened — and it happened fast (Acts 8:35-38).

And what about the sharp-sounding verse people quote?

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Mark 16:16 (KJV)

Read the second half again, carefully. Jesus did not say "he that is not baptized shall be lost." He said *he that believeth not*. What condemns a person is refusing Christ — never a missing river. But if you believe, why would you refuse the very first thing He asks?

What you actually receive

Baptism is not a fee you pay. It is a door you walk through, and there are gifts on the other side.

You receive forgiveness — real, total, finished. Ananias said to Saul, the man who had hunted Christians: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Notice the last words. The washing is tied to *calling on the name of the Lord*. Water never removed one sin. The blood of Jesus does: "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

You receive the Holy Spirit. "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). You do not walk out of that water alone. God Himself comes to live in you, to give you power you did not have before.

You receive new clothes. Here is the answer to the young man at the river:

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Galatians 3:27 (KJV)

Not a scrubbed shirt. A new one. When the Father looks at you now, He sees His Son wrapped around you.

And you receive a family. On the day of Pentecost, "they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). Nobody was left standing alone on the bank. There is one Lord, "one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5), and one family that has room for you in it.

"But I have to fix myself first"

This is the most common reason people wait — and it is the one that breaks a pastor's heart, because it is exactly backwards. Listen:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Ephesians 2:8-9 (KJV)

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Titus 3:5 (KJV)

You do not clean yourself up to come to Jesus. You come to Jesus and He does the cleaning. Waiting until you are good enough is like waiting until you are healthy before you go to the doctor.

Baptism is not you announcing that you have become strong. Peter says it is "the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21). It is a yes. A yes from a person who knows they cannot save themselves, spoken to the One who can.

And to be completely honest with you: coming up out of that water does not mean you will never struggle again. It means you will never struggle alone again. Jesus' own last promise in the baptism command was, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20).

Baptism is the starting line of the walk, not the finish line.

The man who would not wait

There is a story in Acts chapter 8 that I love, because the man in it wastes no time at all.

A high official from Ethiopia is riding home in his chariot, reading Isaiah out loud and not understanding a word of it. God sends Philip to run alongside the chariot. Philip climbs up, opens the Scripture, "and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). And then the road turns a corner, and the man sees something:

"See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"

Acts 8:36 (KJV)

What a question. Not *maybe next year*. Not *after I sort out my life*. Just: **what is stopping me?** They stopped the chariot, both men went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. And then comes the last line, my favourite line in the whole chapter:

"and he went on his way rejoicing."

Acts 8:39 (KJV)

He did not go home with a certificate. He went home with joy.

So let the question be yours now, honestly, with nobody watching: **what is stopping you?** Is it fear of what people will say? Is it a habit you are not sure you can leave? Is it that quiet voice telling you that someone like you would never be accepted? Bring that exact reason to Jesus. He has heard it before, from better people and worse, and He has never once turned away someone who came.

The mother at the river was right. Some stains don't come out. You don't need a cleaner shirt. You need a new one — and Christ is holding it out to you right now.

Is there any water near you today?

Would you like to know more about Jesus, study the Bible, or take this step yourself? Talk to us. We will study with you — free, in your language, at your pace, by phone or in person. No pressure, no cost, no judgment. Bring your hardest question and your heaviest stain; both are welcome here.

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Or leave a comment, send us a direct message, and **subscribe + follow + share** on YouTube and Facebook.

Don't miss what's next. Once the old life is buried, there is Someone new to get to know — and the best way to know Him is to meet Him in His own words. Our next resource is a free printable plan: *"7-Day Reading Plan: Meet Jesus in the Gospels."* Seven days, seven short passages, one Person. Subscribe now so it reaches you the day it comes out — if you wait, you will have to go looking for it. 

SHARE THIS WITH SOMEONE WHO THINKS IT IS TOO LATE TO START OVER

Viewer Handout

Baptism: A Brand-New Beginning — pocket version

5 truths to remember

1. Jesus was baptized first — He stepped into the water for us, and heaven answered with the Spirit and the Father's voice (Matthew 3:15-17).
2. Baptism is a burial and a resurrection: the old life goes down, a new life comes up, and God does the raising (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12).
3. That is why we go all the way under — the form carries the message (John 3:23; Acts 8:38; Mark 1:10).
4. The order Jesus gave is hear, believe, repent, be baptized, keep following (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38).
5. You do not clean yourself up first. Grace saves; Jesus does the changing; you receive forgiveness, the Holy Spirit, new clothes and a family (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:27; Acts 2:41).

Memory verse

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Romans 6:4 (KJV)

Think & pray about it

- What is the one thing in my past I have been scrubbing at, that I have never actually handed to Jesus?
- The Ethiopian asked, "what doth hinder me?" — if I answer that honestly about myself, what is my real reason?
- If baptism is a starting line and not a finish line, what would my first week of "newness of life" look like?

Presenter Bullet Sheet

- **Open with the story** (the young man scrubbing the stained shirt at the river; "you don't need a cleaner shirt, you need a new one"). Ask the room: "Have you ever tried to fix something in your life that would not come clean?" Let it be quiet for a moment.
- **Point 1 — Jesus went first:** Matthew 3:13-17. He had nothing to repent of; He stepped in for us. Water, Spirit, and the Father's voice — three gifts in one moment.
- **Point 2 — A funeral and a resurrection:** Romans 6:3-4, 6; Colossians 2:12. Stress that *God* does the raising, by the same power that raised Jesus. Land on 2 Corinthians 5:17.
- **Point 3 — Why immersion:** *baptizo* = to immerse; John 3:23 ("much water"); Acts 8:38 (down into / up out of); Mark 1:10; Romans 6:4 (a burial). The form carries the message — don't lose the sermon the water preaches.
- **Point 4 — The order Jesus gave:** Matthew 28:19-20 (teach → baptize → keep teaching); Acts 2:38 (repent and be baptized); Acts 8:12 (they believed, then were baptized). Handle Mark 16:16 carefully: condemnation falls on *unbelief*, not on a missing river.
- **Point 5 — What you receive:** forgiveness through calling on His name (Acts 22:16; 1 John 1:7), the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), new clothes (Galatians 3:27), a family (Acts 2:41; Ephesians 4:5).
- **Point 6 — Answer the big objection:** "I must fix myself first." Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 3:21 ("the answer of a good conscience"). You come to be cleaned, not because you are clean.
- **Point 7 — Be honest about after:** Matthew 28:20 ("I am with you always"); Philippians 1:6. Baptism is a starting line. Promise no easy road — promise a Companion. Make no promises of healing, money or guaranteed outcomes.
- **Close with Acts 8:** tell the Ethiopian's story; land on "what doth hinder me to be baptized?" and "he went on his way rejoicing."
- **Appeal:** Ask each person to name their own hindrance silently and hand it to Jesus in prayer. Invite anyone ready to speak with you afterward about baptism and free Bible study — with no pressure and no cost.

- **Close:** Memory verse (Romans 6:4) + tease the next resource ("7-Day Reading Plan: Meet Jesus in the Gospels").

10 Myths vs. Facts

Myth	Fact (with Bible)
1. Baptism is just an old ceremony that doesn't really mean anything.	Jesus commanded it (Matthew 28:19) and was baptized Himself (Matthew 3:15-17). Scripture calls it a real death and resurrection with Christ: "buried with him by baptism into death... even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4).
2. The water itself washes sin away.	Water removes no sin — "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Baptism is "the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21), and Acts 22:16 ties the washing to "calling on the name of the Lord."
3. I must clean up my life first, then be baptized.	"By grace are ye saved through faith... not of works" (Ephesians 2:8-9); He saved us "according to his mercy" (Titus 3:5). Peter said "Repent, and be baptized" (Acts 2:38) — and about three thousand were baptized that same day (Acts 2:41).
4. Sprinkling a little water is the same thing.	Baptism is pictured as a burial (Romans 6:4). John baptized at Aenon "because there was much water there" (John 3:23); Philip and the eunuch "went down both into the water" (Acts 8:38); Jesus came "up out of the water" (Mark 1:10).
5. Babies should be baptized so they will be safe.	In the Bible, baptism always follows hearing, believing and repenting — choices only someone old enough to believe can make (Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12; Mark 16:16). Jesus welcomed and blessed little children without baptizing them: "Suffer the little children to come unto me" (Mark 10:14-16).
6. Faith is private — I can just believe in my heart.	Jesus made baptism public and worldwide (Matthew 28:19) and was baptized in front of others (Matthew 3:16). "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father" (Matthew 10:32); see also Romans 10:9-10.

7. After baptism I will never struggle again.	Jesus said to keep "teaching them to observe all things" afterward, and promised "lo, I am with you alway" (Matthew 28:20). Romans 6:4 calls it a <i>walk</i>; "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ" (1 John 2:1); He "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).
8. Anyone who dies unbaptized is automatically lost.	Salvation is "by grace... through faith" (Ephesians 2:8). Jesus promised paradise to the dying thief beside Him, who could not be baptized (Luke 23:42-43). In Mark 16:16 condemnation falls on <i>unbelief</i>, not on a missing river; "the LORD looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).
9. I was baptized before I understood, so it's too late for me.	Paul met believers in Ephesus who had not understood, taught them about Jesus, and "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:1-5). What Scripture asks for is a personal, informed decision — "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5).
10. Baptism is the end of the journey.	It is the doorway. Those baptized at Pentecost "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:41-42), and Jesus' command ends with a lifetime of learning and His constant presence (Matthew 28:20).

Where this comes from (Sources)

This study is built on the Bible and reflects the published beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Verify everything for yourself:

- The Bible — passages on baptism and the new life: Matthew 3:8, 13-17; 10:32; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-10; 10:13-16; 16:16; Luke 23:42-43; John 3:5, 23; Acts 2:38, 41-42; 8:12, 26-39; 10:47; 16:31-33; 19:1-5; 22:16; Romans 6:3-6; 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 3:26-27; Ephesians 2:8-9; 4:5; Philippians 1:6; Colossians 2:12; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 3:21; 1 John 1:7; 2:1; 1 Samuel 16:7 (King James Version, public domain).
- Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Belief #15, "Baptism": <https://adventist.org/beliefs>
- 28 Fundamental Beliefs (2020 edition, PDF): <https://adventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ADV-28Beliefs2020.pdf>
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: <https://gc.adventist.org/>
- Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 10-11 ("The Voice in the Wilderness" and "The Baptism"), and *Steps to Christ* (public domain): <https://whiteestate.org/> / <https://m.egwwritings.org/>

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