



CHANGED BY BAPTISM

Before and After

August 20, 2022

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Ephesians 1:3-14 (NIV) • “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemp-

tion of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.”

Mark 1:4, 5 (NIV) • “And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.”

Acts 19:1-5 (NIV) • “While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ They answered, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’ So Paul asked, ‘Then what baptism did you receive?’ ‘John’s baptism,’ they replied. Paul said, ‘John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.’ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Matthew 3:13-17 (NIV) • “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ Jesus replied, ‘Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my

Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Acts 2:38, 39 (NIV) • “Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.’”

(More: Acts 8:9-13; Acts 8:26-40; Acts 16:13-15; Acts 16:25-34; see additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “CHANGED BY BAPTISM”

What changes at baptism? Nothing? Everything? If people think that by getting wet somehow your eternal destiny changes, then anyone who bathes is home free. There is no magic water that washes away human guilt. There is no shower for the sinner’s stained life. Yet, according to Scripture, the moment of baptism is like a watershed from death to life. It is the most important moment in a person’s life. How can it be?

Often referred to as a “rebirth” or “new life,” baptism becomes a point of entry into a new standing with God. While God loves all His children, not all His children recognize Him as their Father. Baptism becomes a powerful symbol, a statement of faith, a flag in the sand, a giant banner on the wall of your life saying “This is my Savior and Lord, and I belong to Him!”

Savior and Lord: two titles and two different ways to look at our relationship to God in baptism. In this lesson we will look at how baptism symbolizes how we experience salvation and the rulership of the King in our lives. We are officially adopted. We are enlisted in the family business of building the family.

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “CHANGED BY BAPTISM”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Consider the claims of baptism from the Bible.
2. Discuss the beauty of understanding, as well as the danger of misunderstanding, baptism.
3. Completely surrender to God in baptism, or renew the decisions already made by living fully for Christ.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) Bible, copy of a birth certificate and/or adoption certificate, paper, pens or pencils.

Connecting • Bibles, student lessons.

Applying • White/chalkboard, markers/chalk OR paper, pens or pencils, slips of paper with Bible references.

2 BRIDGING

A. THE WEEK IN REVIEW

Allow 10 minutes as students are arriving to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own pro-

gram with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Bring a copy of a birth certificate. The purpose of this exercise is to engage students in thinking about the relational, familial quality of bonds that tie children to their parents. We want them to understand the nature of our relationship to God in baptism and the elements that make the celebration a special moment of change in every believer's life.

Get set • The students are going to draw up two documents—a birth certificate and a certificate of adoption. They will design the layout and the content so as to have a legally binding document. Since they are to make two documents, you can have up to four people in a group, otherwise they can work in pairs. Have them collaborate on the information they feel should be included. (Have a birth certificate to show them later, and if possible an adoption certificate. One can be downloaded from the Internet. If you are unable to locate one, consider the following items for inclusion: names of those adopting the child, name of the child and other personal information, the legal authorities that have jurisdiction in the area, a statement of adoption saying to the effect: I the undersigned hereby agree with the State of _____ and with the child named _____ that the child shall be adopted and treated in all respects as my lawful child and shall enjoy all the rights of a natural child of mine, including the right of inheritance.)

Go • Have the students begin with what they know should be on the documents. Have them report and show their forms. Then share with them items they should include that they have not thought of as part of a legal arrangement.

Debriefing • Ask/Say: How important are

these documents for people? How are adoption and birth different? How are they the same? Let's look at Ephesians 1:3-14. Have students read this passage together. How do you see the elements of a legal arrangement in that passage?

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The purpose of this discussion is to get the students in touch with their experiences of baptism. As they reflect on the events of baptism they touch on the stories of conversion and renewal. Ultimately, the discussion should lead to, "What really happens at baptism?"

Get set • Organize the students into small groups, preferably with an adult.

Go • Have students share stories of baptisms that have stuck in their memories: (1) most memorable baptism, (2) most humorous thing that happened at a baptism, (3) most meaningful baptism.

Debriefing • Ask: What do you think about the following statement: Some people put more effort into planning the wedding than working on the marriage? How do you think that statement might relate to the subject of baptism?

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story:

The following story is about a group of young people that decided they wanted to be baptized. Several of them had studied with their pastor and had come to know and love Jesus. They couldn't wait to let others know about their decision. Their decision was wholehearted, and they were willing to surrender completely to God's plan for their lives. They believed God wanted them to become missionaries and tell others about His great love for them. A few of them were planning to continue studying after their baptism. These young people were excited to surrender their lives to Jesus and be baptized so they could share the good news about the Savior with others.

But sadly, there were a few young people who didn't want to surrender everything to Christ. One said he wanted to be baptized, but he needed to go on vacation first. Another said she needed to finish school before being baptized. A third asked if it was OK to get baptized but not have to share God's love with other people. The last one said he really didn't like water. These young people didn't really understand that baptism represents surrendering their lives to Christ. They were not willing to give all to Jesus.

Jesus is our example and He showed us that it is important to be baptized so others know we have chosen to become children of God. Being baptized symbolizes us dying to self, washing away our sins, and being raised to a new life in Him.

Debriefing • Say/Ask: According to this illustration, it is obvious that there are some who don't fully surrender to Christ in baptism. But how do you know when you are making that "full surrender"?

You might try considering the question in light of the words of the hymn "I Surrender All" (*The Seventh-Day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 309): "All to Jesus I surrender, / All to Him I freely give; / I will ever love and trust Him, / In His presence daily live; / All to Jesus I surrender; / Humbly at His feet I bow, / Worldly pleasures all forsaken; / Take me, Jesus, take me now; / All to Jesus I surrender; / Make me, Savior, wholly Thine; / Let me feel the Holy Spirit, / Truly know that Thou art mine; / All to Jesus I surrender; / Now I feel the sacred flame. / O the joy of full salvation! / Glory, glory to His name!"

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Present the following ideas in your own words:

One of the most interesting facts about being in God's kingdom is that in baptism we become related to Christ and at the same time

submit to the rule of Christ. There are many kingdoms in the world that definitely claim rule over you when you enter them. But how many kingdoms can you count that make you an heir to the king when you enter them? I can think of only one.

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.

Ask: What is similar about this experience of adoption and the experience of being baptized? (The boy wanted to be part of a family, but didn't know how exactly. Even after the adoption was finalized, he was still learning little by little how to trust and how to live as a member of the family.) What is different? (Explore all serious answers.)

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Lead the class in a study about what does and doesn't happen at baptism. The Bible verses are part of the activity in Wednesday's section of the student lesson.

1. **Birth.** Have **John 3:1-8** read aloud. **Say:** When it comes to the kingdom of God, everyone must be born again. Students may ask: Is baptism "mandatory" for salvation, or as a symbol of this rebirth experience? (The Bible examples indicate that baptism by immersion is essential for all who can possibly experience it. Obviously, there are a few extreme circumstances that may not allow full immersion—death bed, prison camp. Be assured that Jesus is most interested in the change of heart.)
2. **Death.** Have **Romans 6:3-7** read aloud. **Ask:** What are you saying to God by your baptism? (I am dying a symbolic death so I don't have to experience eternal death. We allow Christ's death to be payment for us and in baptism simply show the receipt of payment. We come out of the water a new person by faith,

because Christ rose from the dead for us.)

3. **New life.** Have **John 1:10-13** read aloud.

Ask/Say: What is the result of being born again through baptism? (A new life with a new name and a new role to play as one of God’s children.) **Remember what the Father said at the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17), “This is my Son.” Essentially, that is what the Father says at every baptism. In His mind we have always been God’s children, but we all know that in order for there to be a family, we have to make the choice as well. How does this new role change a person?** (It doesn’t change them overnight. You grow as any child grows; you learn step by step. But when you fall, your parents pick you up and teach you the right way to do it. That’s essentially what God does, if you let Him.)

4. **Adopted into God’s family, the church.** Have **1 Corinthians 12:12, 13** read aloud.

Ask: What do these verses suggest? (That baptism brings you into a body that works together for the cause of the kingdom of God.) **How does being a part of the “body” of believers, or the church, help you continue to grow as a Christian? How can it get in the way? What do you think are ways to foster growth after baptism?** (Small groups. Mission trips. Devotions. Leadership. Set goals and have friends help you get there. Develop prayer partners. Ask someone to be a coach or mentor for your growth. Learn and use spiritual gifts.)

(NOTE TO TEACHER: Young people report that a down time exists after their baptism during which they don’t know what to do. Nothing happens, and they doubt their decision and question their sincerity. This demonstrates that what happens after baptism is as important as what happens before—Bible studies, classes, etc.)

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Give pairs or small groups (preferably with an adult member) each a slip of paper that has on it one of the following references to baptisms in the Bible: **Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:4, 5; Acts 2:38, 39; Acts 8:9-13; Acts 8:26-40; Acts 16:13-15; Acts 16:25-34; Acts 19:1-5.**

When they have read their stories, ask them to discuss the following questions (the ones applicable to their incident), which you have written where all can see:

1. What made the people in these stories ready for baptism?
2. Were they completely surrendered? How do we know?
3. What in these incidents do you find remarkable, or what gives you a new insight into what baptism is or means?
4. What did the people know beforehand and what did they do afterward?

(Some of these incidents focus on the result of the baptism, such as meeting in churches, being persecuted, doing miracles; others focus on what the person/people heard that caused them to repent; and still others focus on the baptism itself.)

After you have each small group share with the entire class, together, compile a list of 10 suggestions that they feel would help to make baptism more meaningful. Consider sharing the list with the pastor (not as criticism, but as a result of the earliteens’ study on the topic). You might consider attaching a note such as: Dear Pastor, We (the earliteens) want to share with you some of our insights into the “before” and “after” of baptism. Please let us know what you think about them.

Debriefing • Ask: How has your perception of baptism changed as a result of this study? How can you help others who make the decision to be baptized to continue to grow afterward?

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. How would you define baptism in seven words or less?
2. What are some basic things you think a person should be able to say about God and their life before baptism?
3. What are some things you could do at a baptism to make it more memorable and more of an anchor point in a person's spiritual life?
4. What are some expectations you think God has of people before and after baptism?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

Birth. Adoption. Death. Resurrection. Marriage. Growth. There are so many windows

through which to look at baptism. It is a celebration service of many things we think, feel, and believe about ourselves and God. It is important to know what we are claiming by being baptized. It is important to understand who we become at baptism. We don't just get wet—we become members of a universal family as well as a local family. We are sealed in heaven as a child of God. While some choose to be baptized at a young age, and others choose to be baptized later, the fact remains that the faith of those who step into the water for baptism is a saving faith.

As you continue to grow, you learn and develop more. Never forget the childlike way we come to God, because throughout the rest of your life you will be considered a child of God. Maybe you have been wondering whether your past decision counted. It counts to God, you can be sure. But His interest today is in your continuing to grow as a child. If the decision for baptism is still before you, ask what the Ethiopian eunuch said to Philip on the road, "What is getting in the way of my being baptized?"



STUDENT LESSON

CHANGED BY BAPTISM Before and After

August 20, 2022

Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the 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.’ Amen” (Matthew 28:19, 20, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 15, Baptism:** “By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 104, 105

BEFORE AND AFTER

Benjamin sat quietly in the back seat of the new car with his new parents as they made their way to his new home. He had dreamed of this moment for so long, and now it wasn't anything like he had imagined. The foster care homes he had been in were temporary, and the uncertainty of bouncing from home to home, packing what little belongings he had in a small duffel bag, had become a comfortable routine for him. This was different, and he wasn't sure if the permanent nature of this relationship was a

good thing or a terrible mistake.

As they pulled into the driveway, his mother said, “We are home.” The words were foreign to Ben. It was like speaking another language to him. Ben looked at the simple home with the welcome sign draped across the front of the house and choked back the uncertainty welling in him. He wanted this to work more than anything else, but he wondered if he was capable of being a member of a family.

Ben took a deep, audible breath, bravely stepped out of the car, and followed his new mom and dad into the house. He sensed immediately that things were going to be different with this home; he wasn't sure how or why, but he was certain things were going to change. Benjamin was 13 when he was adopted, and he struggled for two years with his new parents. He pushed his new parents in a variety of ways, but eventually their consistent love and commitment to him won him over.

“Of all the emotions you feel,” he reports almost 10 years later, “anxiety about making a mistake and causing your new parents to regret their choice to adopt you is overwhelming. You just want to test their commitment to you and check the depth of their love. What is surprising is that when my parents continued to love me through my rebellion, it made me angry. I thought, *You can't love me this much!* But they did, and eventually I became so used to the gentleness of my new father and the joy and hopefulness of my new mother that I found myself laughing, hugging, trusting, and loving—emotions and actions I had never experienced

before in my life. The most amazing reality of adoption is: They chose me! And later, when I was able to—I chose them.”

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Romans 6:3-7.
- » Fifteen-year-old Shelly sits in church on Sabbath as they conduct a series of baptisms. Young people as well as older ones give their lives to God in baptism. While it is a happy occasion for almost everyone, she is torn by her desire to make a commitment to Christ and her fear that she might not be faithful. She doesn't want to just do it and have it mean nothing in her life, like some of her friends who were baptized years ago. The pastor is now making an appeal for others who want to prepare for baptism. She feels her heart tugging at her. What should she do? What should she ask herself? If you were one of her best friends, what would you say to her?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON BAPTISM

- » Read Acts 16:30-33; Acts 22:16; Galatians 3:27.
- » Jesus did not need to be baptized, because He had no sins to be washed away. But, He knew that we would, so He gave us an example to follow. When we go down into the water of baptism, our sins are washed away, and we die to our old selves. And just as Jesus was raised, so we are raised clean, whole, and new in Him. After we have received our new lives in Him, we are to go and share the good news and invite others to make their decision to follow Jesus and be baptized. Listen! Is the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart and calling you to be baptized?

- » What are you doing to listen and accept the call of the Holy Spirit to give your life and heart in baptism to God?

- » Unscramble the missing words and put them where they belong in this Bible verse.

dednammoc
gnizitpab
tiripS yloH
rehtaF
evresbo
ekam
noS
oG
syawla
wehttaM

“ _____ therefore and _____ disciples of all the nations, _____ them in the name of the _____ and of the _____ and of the _____, teaching them to _____ all things that I have _____ you; and lo, I am with you _____, even to the end of the age.’ Amen” (_____ 28:19, 20, NKJV).

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read John 3:1-7.
- » Most conversions to Christ come before the age of 20. Are you ready to give your life to Jesus and be baptized? Some parents, teachers, and pastors think that young people should wait until they are older to be sure they are ready and understand the decision they are making. If you desire to be baptized, talk to your parents and pastor, they can help you prepare for baptism and find a date that works for everyone.

- » Baptism is an important step, but the days after baptism are equally important. It is important to daily walk with Jesus in prayer, Bible study, and service. Make a plan today to continue walking with your Lord and Savior.
- » “Do you feel that it is too great a sacrifice to yield all to Christ? Ask yourself the question, ‘What has Christ given for me?’ The Son of God gave all—life and love and suffering—for our redemption” (Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 45).

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Match the following texts from the New International Version (available at www.BibleGateway.com) with the sentences that correspond to them.

- A. Matthew 28:16-20
- B. John 3:1-7
- C. Galatians 3:26-29
- D. Romans 6:3-7
- E. 1 Peter 3:18-22
- F. Luke 3:7-14
- G. John 1:10-13
- H. 1 Corinthians 12:12,13

- _____ “Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus.”
- _____ “Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”
- _____ “He was in the world, and . . . the world was made through him.”
- _____ “Just as a body, though one, has many parts.”
- _____ “For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.”
- _____ “For Christ also suffered once for sins.”
- _____ “You are all children of God.”
- _____ “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.”

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13.
- » Review the memory text.
- » Sometimes teenagers, having been baptized younger, feel that they might not have understood “everything” they understand now. That is true in the sense that as a teen you don’t understand as much as you will in college. And when you become a parent, you will find that you know more than you did when you were younger. We should always be learning and growing.
- » Life as a child of God is a journey. Baptism is an important part of that journey, and it needs to be the result of a thoughtful decision. Faith in the grace of God and promise of His power to save you is the beginning. And each day from there on is another opportunity to learn and grow in Christ.
- » Your baptism may be (or may have been) on a perfect day. Your favorite pastor may have been able to baptize you. Yet that is not what matters most. As you continue to grow older you will find challenges that will remind you that you need to surrender to God every day. Seize each moment to recommit your heart to Christ as Lord and Savior, and your baptism will become more and more meaningful as you grow and mature.

