Review:
Did you gain any insights as you read through Genesis 1-11?

BAPTISM

In the New Testament the idea of baptism is introduced by John the Baptist, developed by Jesus himself, and later by the Apostle Paul. Read the following verses to determine what each explained about baptism.

What do you think is the whole meaning behind baptism?

John the Baptist

Mark 1:4-5 (NIV)
4 And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and 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.

What was the focus of John’s baptism?
What do you think being baptized in water symbolized for all these people?

Focus: REPENTANCE

Symbolism: BEING WASHED CLEAN

John was preparing people for the coming of the Messiah and the Kingdom of God. He warned them of their need to see how they had drifted away from God and to seek forgiveness for their sin. As people came, repenting of their sin, they were baptized as a public confession, denouncing their old, sinful way of life and affirming their new loyalty to God. They were preparing for life under the coming Kingdom of God.

Jesus Christ

Matthew 3:13-17 (NIV)
13 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 lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."
Obviously Jesus, being perfect, didn’t need to repent of any sin, so why do you think he might have chosen to get baptized?

1) What statement would Jesus’ baptism have made regarding John’s ministry and message?

**AFFIRMATION**

It would declare that Jesus affirmed John’s ministry and message, which was ultimately about him. When John first saw Jesus coming to him he stated, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” John 1:29 (NIV). By getting baptised by John, Jesus was saying, “John is right, I am the Messiah, I have come to take away people’s sins, and I have come to bring the Kingdom of God. Follow me!”

2) Why did Jesus say he needed to do this to “fulfill all righteousness”?

**AFFIRMING HIS OWN MISSION**

Jesus’ purpose in coming to earth was to die as a substitute sacrifice for our sins. In order to do so, he needed to live a sinless life in complete submission to the will of the Father. He could only accomplish this by fulfilling completely the demands of law as laid out in the Old Testament. When Jesus talks about fulfilling all righteousness, he is not merely talking about the act of baptism, but about living a sinless life that will make it possible for him to die in our place. His baptism is merely the starting point of his mission.

Jesus is also affirming baptism as the initiation rite into the Kingdom of God. By getting baptised himself, he is setting an example for all believers to act out their new faith and relationship with God. It is right for us to be baptised because Jesus calls all of his disciples to follow his example.

3) Why would God the Father say he was pleased with his Son at this point?

**SUBMISSION TO THE FATHER’S WILL**

By getting baptised, Jesus was declaring that he was accepting the mission that the Father set before him – going to the cross. Jesus, obviously, did not look forward to the great suffering he was about to experience. The human part of Jesus dreaded the pain, both spiritually and physically, he was about to endure and his personal preference would have been to avoid it. But Jesus was committed to doing the will of the Father ahead of his own personal preferences and desires.

*Luke 22:42 (NIV)*

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."
Jesus’ ministry starts and ends with the tension of whose “will” will actually prevail. Jesus affirms submission to the Father at the beginning and he affirms his submission at the end.

Baptism is the point of letting go of the control of your life and handing the reins over to God. Jesus had to battle with this just as we all do, yet he obeyed, despite the immense suffering and death it would cost him. Because of this act of submission, the Father responded with his affirmation of love. In a sense, it is equivalent to saying, “Son, I’m proud of you!”

4) In what stage of Jesus’ ministry did his baptism take place?

**LAUNCHING POINT**

Jesus’ baptism took place at the very beginning of his ministry. It was the moment he was empowered by the Holy Spirit for the ministry that was now set before him. Baptism for us is the launching point into our new life of ministry also empowered by the Spirit. It is from this beginning point that we live for a whole new purpose, new set of priorities and life goals.

**JESUS BUILDS ON THE SYMBOLISM**

*Mark 10:38, 39 (NIV)*

“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

“We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with…”

*Luke 12:50 (NIV)*

*But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!*

Jesus adds a deeper symbolism to baptism. What do you think he is really referring to when he talks about the baptism he’ll have to undergo?

- He is referring to his upcoming death.
- He will be immersed into death.
Apostle Paul

Romans 6:3-4 (NIV)
3 Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Colossians 2:12 (NLT)
For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to a new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

According to these verses:

1) What is the symbolism of being lowered into the water?

DEATH AND BURIAL OF YOUR OLD SELF

By uniting ourselves with Christ, his death and burial is applied to us and the death consequence for our sin is now paid for. In baptism we are acting out the fact that through Christ our sinful nature has died and we have been set free from its control. The old nature no longer plays a role in our life – it’s gone! Though we are given a new life with a new nature, we still struggle with sin because we have a body and mind that have been corrupted by sin. On the day when Christ returns the Bible tells us we will be given new bodies and the picture will be complete.
1 Corinthians 15; 1Thessalonians 4:13-17

2) What is the symbolism of coming up out of the water?

RISING TO NEW LIFE

It denotes resurrection. As we unite with Christ in his death, just as the Spirit raised him to new life, so will his Spirit in us give us new life. This new life, empowered by the Holy Spirit, gives us a whole new identity, set of priorities, and life purpose. The Spirit guides us, transforms us, guards us and shows us how to experience intimacy with God. It’s a whole new life.

Marriage Example: When a person gets married the old single life instantly dies. They have become one with another and live their lives in light of that new relationship. Certain things from their old life no longer play a role in their new life and new relationship. In fact, some of those old things would be very destructive to the new relationship (dating, spending money however you wish, going away on the spur of the moment on your own, working long hours at the office, etc.) This new life has new priorities, new habits, new goals and a new lifestyle.
Read the following passages. Focus on why people were getting baptized.

Acts 2:36-41
36"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."
When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"
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."
With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 8:34-38
34The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.
As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

Acts 16:29-34
29The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"
They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God--he and his whole family.

According to these verses, who should get baptized and when?
Those who have come to a point where they:
• BELIEVE Jesus to have died for them and rose again, offering them forgiveness and new life.
• Confess their sin and REPENT.

People were baptized at the point they placed faith in Jesus Christ and received new life, the point in time when they died to their old self and received the Holy Spirit.
Picture Summary:

WATER: BEING WASHED CLEAN
GOING INTO THE WATER: DEATH AND BURIAL OF YOUR OLD SELF
RISING FROM THE WATER: RISING TO NEW LIFE IN CHRIST
WALKING OUT OF THE WATER: LAUNCHING INTO A NEW LIFE OF MINISTRY AND MISSION

HOME STUDY:

Read Genesis 12–20