

ML104 The Number Eight

Ask some Bible scholars what the number eight means and they will say “A new beginning.” But is this correct? You should prove every definition before you attempt to use it. So let’s see what we can learn about this one.

[Before continuing, study “Introduction to Bible Numerology,” FL204, and “Understanding Figures,” FL104. The former teaches the meanings of the nine roots [1-9], their relationships to the teens [11-19], and how the roots work in different decimal places [ones, tens, hundreds, thousands]. The latter teaches the use of “figures.” Peter understood figures and used the water of Noah’s flood to help teach the purpose of water baptism.] Now let’s continue this lesson with a scripture from Genesis:

And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed [Ge 17:12].

An eight-day-old child has just begun life. Why would it need a new beginning? That definition doesn’t pass the common-sense test. Let’s turn to those scriptures Peter used. Perhaps they can help determine what eight means.

Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water [1Pe 3:20].

The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: [1Pe 3:21].

The eight souls in V20 didn’t begin a “new life” when they left the ark; but they put away the filth of the flesh in a figure — Peter’s doctrine in V21. Refer to these verses often as we continue.

First, notice that “salvation of souls by water” in Noah’s ark is a figure of “salvation of souls by the water” in the

church baptistry. As you saw in FL104, figures compare like substances with like substances. You learn the primary message by comparing substance with substance and then by symbols filling in the details.

For example, “Adam is “a figure of him that was to come” [Ro 5:14]. Adam was a man; Jesus was a man. Adam sacrificed his life for his wife [Eve]; Jesus sacrificed His life for His “Israel and Gentiles.” This is only two comparisons of many in the lives of these two men.

Based on 1Pe 3:20-21, the baptistry water saves souls like the flood water saved souls. This is the figure, but we should compare the details to understand Peter’s doctrine.

The flood water saved 8 souls by lifting them above water; the baptistry water saves many souls by lifting them out of water. Without getting deeper into water baptism, the flood water buried dead souls and the baptistry water buries living souls. [Here, we must apply 1Pe 3:21 to ensure that we don’t get off course.]

The flood water represents Moses’s Law. Noah’s exit from the ark represents freedom from the Law. The baptistry water represents the law also, and being raised from the water is figurative of the exit from the ark. Both exits show deliverance from the law that is contrary to us [Col 2:14].

One purpose of the law is to kill the “Old Man” [Col 3:9]. He dies during the new birth. Water baptism buries the “Old Man” and the minister raises the “New Man” in the likeness of Christ’s resurrection from the dead.

Thus, you put off the “Old Man” and you put on the “New Man.” Eight souls were in the ark to teach that the temporary salvation of the body comes by “putting off the old man” and by “putting on the new man.”

So then, the number eight [8] means “to put off.” If you have read “Introduction to Bible Numerology [FL204], you can now see how eight [8] means “to put off” and how eighteen [18] means “to put on.” Eighteen [18] is the opposite of eight [8].