

Baptism: An Expression of an Impression

(An Explanation of 1 Peter 3:18-21)

by Wayne Dunaway

Introduction:

- 1) Whatever this section teaches, it teaches regarding the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ.
- 2) The key to understanding this is found in **verse 18**: This verse emphasizes that Christ:
 - a) “*suffered* once for sins” (**1 Peter 3:18a**)
 - b) was “*put to death in the flesh*” (**1 Peter 3:18b**)
 - c) and “*was made alive by the Spirit*” (**1 Peter 3:18c**)
- 3) Peter then explains that the same Spirit who made Jesus alive is the same Spirit that preached to the disobedient in Noah’s day who are now in prison. (**1 Peter 3:19-20**).
- 4) Then Peter says, “*eight souls were saved by water*” (1 Peter 3:20)
- 5) What did this mean and what is the point? The point seems to be that the same water that destroyed the wicked is the same water that saved eight souls. Had there been no “water” there would have been no destruction or salvation.
- 6) In other words, the same means (water) that God used to **punish sin** is the same means (water) that He used to **provide salvation**.
- 7) Therefore the “water” of the flood was a type of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.
- 8) The same means [Christ being put to death on the flesh (v. 18)] that God used “*once for all sin*” (**v.18**) is the same means He used to make “*alive by the Spirit*” (**v.18**) which is the “*resurrection of Jesus Christ*” (**v.21b**).\
- 9) Baptism (the antitype) is said to save us because it is a demonstration of our faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

- 10) It is important to realize that when Peter says “*baptism saves us*” he is not talking about the act itself but what the act represents and means to us.
- 11) It is a declaration of our faith, trust, and dependence on the suffering of Christ for sin “*that He might bring us to God*” (v.18) “*through the resurrection of Jesus*”(v.21b).
- 12) Baptism is said to save us, not because of what the act of baptism **accomplishes** (because it can literally do no more than wash the dust from the body), but because of what the act of baptism **acknowledges** (our total trust and dependence on what Jesus has done).
- 13) The water in Noah’s day both destroyed and saved at the same time. Peter himself makes that perfectly clear. For example:
 - a. He clearly states that “*the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water*” (**2 Peter 3:6**)
 - b. He also said that God brought “*the flood on the world of the ungodly*” (**2 Peter 2:5**)
 - c. But he also says that “*eight souls were saved by water*” (1 Peter 3:21)
 - d. Therefore the same means that God used to destroy sinners is the same means He used to save Noah and his family.
- 14) Baptism is an antitype of the water of the flood because it represents to the believer the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, who is the means of salvation.
 - a. Like the water of the flood, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus both destroyed and saved at the same time.
 - b. He died that “*he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil*” (**Hebrews 2:14**)
 - c. Christ “*suffered once for sins*” (**1 Peter 3:18**) and was “*made...to be sin for us*” (**2 Corinthians 5:21**)
 - d. In other words, in dying on the cross Jesus suffered the judgment of God against sin (Zech. 13:7). Like the water in Noah’s day, the cross was made the means of destroying sin and its power.
 - e. But at the same time the cross provided salvation for the believers. He was “*delivered up for our offenses*” and was “*raised for our justification*” (**Rom. 4:25**). And we “*shall be saved from wrath through Him*” (**Rom. 5:9**)

- f. Like the water of Noah's day, the cross was God's means of saving the believer.

SPECIAL NOTE:

1. Understanding this should help us understand why the "*brazen serpent*" (**Numbers 21**) was a type of the *blessed Savior* (**John 3:14**). The serpent represents sin. And bronze was used at times to represent God's judgment. Moses said that, if Israel sinned, God would make the heavens "*bronze*" (**Duet. 28:23**)
2. When Jesus died on the cross it was typified by the bronze snake because Christ's death on the cross was God's judgment against sin.
3. The sword of God's justice was used against "*the man who is my equal*" (or "*fellow*" KJV) (**Zech. 13:7**).
4. Isaiah said, "... *it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief*" (**Isa. 53:10**).
5. God saw the "*labor of his soul*" and His justice was "*satisfied*" (**Isa. 53:11**). See also **Romans 3:24-25**.
6. The death of Jesus was God's judgment against sin, just as the water of Noah's day was God's judgment against sin. The death of Jesus was also God's means of salvation, just as the water of Noah's day was the means of salvation. We need to understand that baptism is an *expression of an impression*. The death of Jesus for our sins **impresses** the believer so much that he **expresses** that trust by being buried with Him in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life (**Romans 6:2-5**). Baptism thus does save us "*by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*" (**1 Peter 2:21**)