

## Baptism Saves Us – 1 Peter 3:21

DJ Curry

One of the most direct statements in the Bible, which declares the necessity of baptism, is located in the first book of Peter. “There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 3:21 NKJV). The Scripture plainly and directly states, “There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism...” Those who wish to argue against this Scripture make the argument that we claim baptism saves us and not Jesus. There is nothing wrong with saying what the Bible says. So, if the Bible says baptism saves us, then that means baptism saves us. Affirming this Scripture does not deny the saving power of Jesus Christ’s blood but highlights the method by which we make contact with the blood of Christ through baptism. Denying this Scripture would be denying Jesus’ words, which are the exact words that will judge us (John 12:48).

### **What is Baptism?**

With this Scripture in mind, 1 Peter 3:21 says baptism is an antitype. An antitype is a corresponding to, a representation, or a copy.<sup>1</sup> What is it a representation of? Thanks to the inspired word of God, we can read that baptism is the antitype to Jesus Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:3-4). When someone is buried in baptism with water (Eph 5:26; 1 Pet 3:20) and raised back up for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), that is the baptism that is a representation of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. The only baptism we can complete today that saves us (Eph 4:4) anything else is not biblical, not in the authority of God, and not the saving baptism of Jesus Christ.

### **How Does Baptism Save?**

The Scripture ends with “...through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” We have revealed to us that the power of baptism is given through Jesus Christ’s resurrection. Baptism only has the ability to save thanks to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So, as the Scripture says, “There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism ... through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 3:21). The power of the Son of God is by the resurrection (Rom 1:4). The resurrection is what has given power to the blood of Christ which has redeemed us (Eph 1:7). When we are properly baptized, we are washing our sins away (Acts 22:16) with the blood of Jesus (Rev 1:5). That is how baptism saves.

### **Who Does Baptism Save?**

Everyone capable of hearing the gospel, believing, confessing Jesus’ deity, and repenting can be saved by baptism. Our key text for this writing says, “...the answer of a good conscience toward God...” (1 Pet 3:21). Those who are being saved by baptism are answering their conscience just as those who were cut to the heart in Acts 2 and were baptized. Those who are unable to possess a conscience or belief, such as infants, are not yet eligible for baptism. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Rom 1:16, emp. added). Baptism can save anyone capable of belief.

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<sup>1</sup> William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 90.