

# 1 Peter 3:20-21

By Ron Boatwright

1 Peter 3:20-21 says, "Which sometimes 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. The like figure whereunto even baptism does 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." This scripture in referring back to the flood during Noah's day, says "eight souls were saved by water". The verse says that Noah and his family were saved by the water of the flood. The ultimate ground of Noah's salvation was the grace or unmerited favor of God, but water was the instrument God used for their salvation. The same water by which God destroyed the wicked, God used to save the righteous who were in the ark. How did the water of the flood save Noah and his family? The flood waters of Noah's day saved Noah and his family by separating them from the sinful world.

This verse says that "the like figure whereunto even baptism does also now save us". "The like figure" means in like manner. The Lord has chosen the waters of baptism to separate us from the sinful world of our day. It is in baptism that the Lord has chosen to forgive us our sins as the people are told in Acts 2:38 to "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins". So it is in baptism that the Lord takes away our sins, and we are now spiritually separated from the sinful world of our day, just as Noah and his family were saved when they were separated from the sinful world of their day by the flood waters.

Many people today do not agree with what God's word says about baptism and "twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16). The verse says, "baptism does now also saves us". Numerous efforts have been made to evade the force of this scripture by saying "baptism does not save us" from sin. This is only a lie of Satan. If baptism does not save us from sin, then from what does it save us? It does not save us from hunger. It does not save us from illness. It does not save us from an accident. It does not save us from physical death.

In like figure today God uses water in baptism in saving people from their sin. In Acts 22:16 Saul of Tarsus was told, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord. The same question is being asked of people today. Why are you

waiting? This is God's business as to why he chose the waters of baptism to take away our sins.

So First Peter 3:21 is in agreement with Mark 16:16 in which both say that one is saved when he is baptized, not before. It is at the point of baptism that the Lord has chosen to save us. Baptism is not for the purpose of washing the dirt off of our flesh (1 Peter 3:21), but baptism is when God removes all of our past sins and remembers them against us no more. It is only after we are baptized that we can have "the answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Peter 3:21).

Many good people erroneously think they are saved when they "accept Christ as their personal saviour" and say the sinner's prayer. But where do you find these instructions in the Bible? They are not there. This is something man has dreamed up. Then two or three weeks later they are baptized, but they are not baptized for the purpose of the forgiveness of their sins and to be saved because they thought their sins were forgiven and they were saved before they were baptized. In this case their sins were not forgiven and they were not saved because their baptism was not for this purpose. They still have every sin they have ever committed and are still lost. People in this situation are still lost because they have believed a lie. As we read in 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth."

I cannot think of a more flagrant crime against both God and Man than to teach lost sinners, who want to be saved something different than what God says in the Bible. Jesus says in Mark 16:16, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved". There is nothing hard to understand about this. Until people do what the Lord says that one must do to be saved, then they are still hopelessly lost. **God has no non-essential commands.**