



# Timaru church of Christ

## Peter's Use of the Antitype or Figure

According to I Peter 3:18-21 Jesus Christ, the just one, died for the sins of all, the unjust ones, "for all have sinned" (Romans 3:23). He died upon the cross once that he might bring to God all who have obeyed the word of God. When he says "all" he is meaning every accountable soul from the beginning of creation until the day He reappears in judgement. By comparing Peter's statements in 1 Peter 3 with some of his statements in 2 Peter 2, we understand that the means by which Jesus preached to the "spirits in prison" of past ages was through prophets and preachers he sent forth, one of whom was Noah, "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2:5). He preached God's Word to his generation while he built the ark (1 Pet. 1:21). Noah's generation proved to be "disobedient" and its members are being "reserved unto judgment" in "Hell" (i.e., *tartarus*, the abode of the wicked dead in Hades) (2 Pet. 2:4). Jesus did His preaching by means of His agent, Noah, to those of Noah's time **while they were alive**, but who had died and were in "Hell" at the time Peter wrote. Neither 1 Peter 3:19 nor any other passage teaches, as some assert, that Christ personally visited Hell and tried to rescue some from it by preaching to them.

Just as Noah preached that the earth would eventually be flooded and consequently all air breathing life would be destroyed; that same flood would be responsible for saving life. It is easy to see just how the water would save by looking at the difference between Noah and his family and those who perished. The difference between them is that the dead are said to have been "disobedient" to the proclamation of Christ. Again, that is not to say Christ was there in person, but representatively in word through Noah. Remember, the Gospel of John opens with these words: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth*" (John 1:1, 14). So when Noah was telling them that if they wanted to be saved they needed to get on board that ark he was building, it was as though Jesus was there telling them to do so. The same water that would destroy those outside the ark would save those who were in it by causing the ark to float above the death and destruction.

Now that was the message to Noah's generation. What Peter goes on to say is that there is a similar message for people living today. He says, "the like figure" to Noah's salvation by water is water baptism which saves the soul from **eternal** destruction (*figure* in Koine Greek is *antitupon*, meaning "a thing resembling another, its counterpart, something in the Messianic times which answers to the type, as baptism corresponds to the deluge such as found in I Peter 3:22," according to *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*). What Peter means is that, just as Noah was saved by the water because he and his family obeyed the word that said to build the ark and enter it at the time God specified, so too, those who obey the word of Christ as per the New Testament will be saved through the water of baptism. Peter adds that baptism is not an act



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intended to cleanse the body, but one intended to provide “the answer of a good conscience toward God”. Did you get that? When one is Scripturally taught the subject of baptism and is then baptized, the response of his conscience is one of approval (i.e., “a good conscience”), knowing he has complied with God’s Word.

It is therefore not a coincidence that Ananias told Saul (later to be known as the apostle Paul) to “be baptized and wash away” his sins (Acts 22:16). Oh, and just in case someone thinks there must be something mysterious or perhaps magical about the water, then please think once again upon Peter’s words, “not putting away the filth of the flesh,” which indicate there is nothing physical going on. Rather, baptism has to do entirely with spiritual matters. While the baptism Ananias demanded of Saul was in water, he did not tell Saul that water would wash his sins away, as readers sometimes erroneously assume. No amount of water can wash away even one sin. Were that possible, the Saviour could have stayed in Heaven, for there is an abundance of water on earth. Acts 22:16 does not tell us **what** washes away sins, but **when** sins are washed away or forgiven. Other passages tell us that the only cleansing agent for sin is the sinless blood of the Christ, shed in His death (1 Pet. 1:18–20; Rev. 1:5; 14:7; et al.). Romans 6:3 combines baptism and the blood of Jesus: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” One comes into fellowship with Christ when he is baptized because baptism is the means, yea, the **only** means, of accessing the cleansing power of Jesus’ blood. Thus Ananias told Saul that in the act of baptism the blood of Christ would “wash away” his sins. Therefore, if one denies the necessity of baptism for salvation, he denies the necessity of the blood of Christ to cleanse him of sin: No baptism—no blood; no blood—no forgiveness; no forgiveness—no eternal life in Heaven. No wonder Peter wrote, “baptism doth also now save us” (1 Pet. 3:21).

(Now see page 2 for diagrams)

(All scriptures quoted are from the King James Version)

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(I want to issue a big thank you to my friend and brother in Christ, Dub McClish for valuable assistance and input to this article.)

Noah, the "preacher of righteousness" proclaims God "will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air...for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Genesis 6:7, 12)



Noah and his family were saved by the water that raised them above the destruction below, "for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation" says God in Genesis 7:1. However, the rest of his generation perished because they proved to be disobedient to the proclaimed message.

### Very important point:

Peter says, "The like figure" is water baptism which saves the soul from eternal punishment. ("figure" in Koine Greek is *antitupon* meaning "a thing resembling another, its counterpart, something in the Messianic times which answers to the type, as baptism corresponds to the deluge such as found in I Peter 3:21" according to Thayer)

Peter says Noah's salvation is a type or figure to come; namely water baptism which he says, "doth also now save" (I Peter 3:21).

Paul says this baptism is a burial (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12).

When a soul is baptised the old man of sin is buried and the new man is raised in the likeness of Christ, that is, resurrected.



The soul is raised up out of the water now "as a new creature" (II Corinthians 5:17) to live a new life, saved from the effects of sin.

