

## 1 Peter 3:18-22

Sec 2. “There is, in every sacrament, a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign & the thing signified: whence it comes to pass, that the names & effects of the one are attributed to the other.”

A. 1 Pet 3:20 is one of the best examples of what sec 2 is saying here. Look at the middle of vv20-21. **“...during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, 8 persons, were brought safely through the water. <sup>21</sup>Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you”**

1. Before explaining the key passage in question, I want to read to an outstanding explanation from Dr. Kistemaker regarding the relation between the worldwide flood, the ark, & baptism.<sup>1</sup>

2. If someone asked me to explain the phrase, **“baptism now saves you,”** I would begin by saying to keep on reading v21f **“baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup>who is at the right hand of God,”**

a. Peter here goes on to say you are not saved by the removal of dirt from the flesh when water is used.

b. What is necessary to save you is **“an appeal to God for a good conscience [saving faith]— through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup>who is at the right hand of God,”**

3. Another way I would explain this phrase **“baptism now saves you”** is to cite WCF 27, sec 2: “There is, in every sacrament, a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign & the thing signified: whence it comes to pass, that the names & effects of the one are attributed to the other”

4. Again, Dr. Kistemaker wrote regarding the phrase **“baptism now saves you”**(p147).<sup>2</sup>

B. Another example of Sec 2 in Scripture is found in 1 Cor 10:16-18. Turn there.

Sec 3. “The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it: but upon the work of the Spirit, & the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.”

A. There was some debate in seminary whether or not unleavened bread should be used. There was also a debate about the use of grape juice not being in accordance with the words of institution.

1. In the case of either elements used, bread is bread & the fruit of the vine is being used.

2. Many of us may have our preferences; however, it is good to keep in mind the beginning of

---

<sup>1</sup> Kistemaker, Simon J. *New Testament Commentary: James, Epistles of John, Peter, and Jude*, p147.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*.

sec 3: "The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them."

B. A classic example of why sec 3 is important is when the minister who administered your baptism later denies the faith & dies in unbelief. Does that make your baptism invalid? The answer is: "neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it: but [the efficacy of a sacrament depends] upon the work of the Spirit, & the word of institution."

1. The words of institution are the words in which Christ or an apostle gives the command & instruction on carrying-out that sacrament.
2. The efficacy of a sacrament depends "upon the work of the Spirit, & the word" of God.
3. One of the most interesting cases I have head of came from some Russian evangelical Christians we met in South Carolina. They came to faith by an undercover KGB agent playing the part of the church's pastor.
  - a. God can use a crooked stick to accomplish the salvation of many sinners.
  - b. Turn to **Phil 1:12-18**. Considering this passage, it does not negate Scripture's call to have elders (ruling & teaching) who are upright in character & sincere in ministry.
4. Your growth in the means of grace is dependent upon the grace of God through His Word & Holy Spirit & not dependent upon a man.