

1 Peter 3:21

An Original Translation from the UBS-5 by Tyler Robbins
Revised October 2016

1. FINISHED TRANSLATION:

1 Peter 3:21: which corresponds to [the] immersion which has saved you, too (not [as] [the] removal of filth from the body, but [as] an appeal of [a] good conscience to God), because of [the] resurrection of Jesus Christ.

2. THOUGHT-FLOW DIAGRAM:

- ὁ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σώζει βάπτισμα,
 - o οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπου
 - o ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν,
 - δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

3. DETAILED TRANSLATION NOTES:

1 Peter 3:21	ὁ	καὶ	ὑμᾶς	ἀντίτυπον	νῦν	σώζει	βάπτισμα	οὐ	σαρκὸς	ἀπόθεσις	ῥύπου
	nsn	conj	2 nd ,pl,a	nsn	adv	3 rd ,s,p,a,i	nsn	neg	gsf	nsf	gsm
	which	and	you	corresponds to	now	it is saving you	immersion baptism	not	flesh, body	laying aside, putting off	of dirt, filth
	And which corresponds to [the] immersion now saving you, not [a] laying aside of [a] filthy body, which corresponds to [the] immersion which has saved you, too (not [as] [the] removal of filth from the body,										

ὁ:

- (1) **Classification** – a relative pronoun referring back to an antecedent, water, from 1 Peter 3:20.¹ The “water” is in the genitive case in 1 Peter 3:20, but that is because it is the direct object of the preposition ὕδατος. The word’s natural gender is nominative neuter, which matches the subject nominative βάπτισμα here.

καὶ:

- (1) **Classification** – a adjunctive conjunction (“also, too”)²

ὑμᾶς:

¹ cf. A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), 1 Pe 3:21.

² cf. D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (reprint; Winona Lake, IN: BMH, 2008), 246-247.

1 Peter 3:21

An Original Translation from the UBS-5 by Tyler Robbins
Revised October 2016

- (1) **Classification** – a personal pronoun functioning as the direct object receiving the action of the verb σώζει.

ἀντίτυπον:

- (1) **Case** – a nominative of apposition, providing more information about the subject nominative “immersion.” This is a difficult classification; indeed, Kostenberger (et al) caution the predicate nominative is quite similar to the nominative of apposition.³ A.T. Robertson even said of the predicate nominative, “it is really apposition.”⁴ The key factor why I classify this usage as apposition, not a predicate nominative, is that there is no present or implied “being” verb at all.
- (2) **Translation** – Peter is not saying Christian baptism is a fulfillment of an Old Testament type. He is simply saying Christian baptism *corresponds to*⁵ and bears a marked resemblance to the account of Noah and His family being borne to safety on the floodwaters. There is a correspondence and similarity between the two, not a typological fulfillment. As A.T. Robertson wrote, “it is only a vague parallel, but not over-fanciful.”⁶
- As Charles Bigg observed, “the mention of Noah had led him to speak of Baptism, which at first strikes him as **analogous** to the Flood, inasmuch as it is a deliverance from drowning in the waters of sin.”⁷

νῦν:

- (1) **Classification** – an adverb of time (“now”), indicating Peter is referring to believers in his day and age.⁸

σώζει:

³ “More commonly, however, the predicate nominative describes a larger category of which the subject is a subset. In this regard, the predicate nominative is not dissimilar to an apposition,” (Andreas J. Kostenberger, Benjamin L. Merkle, Robert L. Plummer, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek: An Intermediate Study of the Grammar and Syntax of the New Testament* [Nashville, TN: B&H, 2016; Kindle ed.], KL 1529-1532).

⁴ A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research*, 3rd ed. (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1934), 457.

⁵ See BDAG, s.v. “744 ἀντίτυπος,” 1.

⁶ Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 1 Pet 3:21.

⁷ Charles Bigg, *The Epistles of St. Peter and Jude*, in *International Critical Commentary* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1903), 164. Emphasis mine.

⁸ “The temp. adv. νῦν moves the discussion from the time of Noah to that of Peter’s contemporaries, with καὶ ὑμεῖς (“also you”) possibly occupying an emphatic position (Elliott 669), serving to underscore that it is the readers who are Peter’s main concern,” (Greg Forbes, *1 Peter*, in *Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* [Nashville, TN: B&H, 2014; Kindle ed.], KL 4065-4067).

1 Peter 3:21

*An Original Translation from the UBS-5 by Tyler Robbins
Revised October 2016*

- (1) **Voice** – a simple active, indicating the subject (“immersion”) performed the action of the verb
- (2) **Time** – context suggests a present of existing results, where Peter focuses on an act in the past whose ramifications continues right up until the present. It is translated with a perfective flavor (“has saved”).
 - o It *could* also be a durative present, if you view this “immersion” as the baptism of the Holy Spirit (i.e. regeneration). This is *very* tempting, and I haven’t yet made up my mind on this one. I think I may come down on this being Spirit baptism in the end.
- (3) **Mood** – a declarative indicative.

βάπτισμᾶ

- (1) **Case** – the subject nominative.

οὐ:

- A negation modifying the word ἀπόθεις. Whatever baptism is, Peter explains, it is *not* the removal of filth from the body. It is not an act associated with ritualistic purification. It is not an external act with physical effects.
- Greg Forbes disagrees, and believes Peter is saying baptism is not *only* the removal of the filth from the body, it is *also* an answer of a good conscience towards God. “Consequently, the purpose here is to emphasize that baptism does not function as an automatic rite of forgiveness/spiritual cleansing; it must be accompanied by some form of response to God.”⁹
- In other words, Forbes sees baptism as aiding or contributing to salvation. “Peter’s point is that salvation is mediated via the baptismal rite.”¹⁰ This is an . . . *interesting* position for a Baptist to take!
- I believe this is incorrect. I do not believe Peter is equating baptism with external washing, so the reference to “removal of filth from the body” is not literal. I believe Peter is essentially arguing against baptismal regeneration, against the idea that the act of baptism actually *does* anything to effect, assist or complete salvation.¹¹ “Peter here expressly denies baptismal remission of sin.”¹² Instead

⁹ Greg Forbes, *1 Peter*, in Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2014; Kindle ed.), KL 4114-4115.

¹⁰ Forbes, *1 Peter*, KL 4139.

¹¹ Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 249.

¹² Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 1 Pet 3:21.

1 Peter 3:21

An Original Translation from the UBS-5 by Tyler Robbins
Revised October 2016

(“but”), baptism is an answer of a good conscience towards God. It does not, in and of itself, accomplish anything at all.

σαρκὸς:

- (1) **Case** – an objective genitive, functioning as the direct object of the idea “removal of filth.”¹³

ἀπόθεσις:

- (1) **Case** – an independent nominative. Your guess is as good as mine.

ῥύπου:

- (1) **Case** – a genitive of separation,¹⁴ indicating “motion away from or distance, whether literally or figuratively.”¹⁵
- σαρκὸς.

ἀλλά	συνειδήσεως	ἀγαθῆς	ἐπερώτημα	εἰς	θεόν	δι'	ἀναστάσεως	Ἰησοῦ	Χριστοῦ
conj	gsf	gsf	nsn	prep	asm	prep	gsf	gsm	gsm
but	consciousness	of good	appeal, pledge,	into	God	by, through	raising, resurrection	of Jesus	Messiah
but [an] appeal of [a] good conscience concerning God, because of [the] resurrection of Jesus Christ.									
but [as] an appeal of [a] good conscience to God), because of [the] resurrection of Jesus Christ.									

ἀλλά:

- (1) **Classification** – a contrasting conjunction.

συνειδήσεως:

- (1) **Case** – a genitive of communicative content; Peter is describing what this appeal consists of. Most commentators believe this is either the implied object or subject of the clause.¹⁶ I completely disagree. The subject (“an appeal”) is already identified in the nominative case. This “good conscience” Peter goes on to mention defines what this appeal consists of. I see no problem with this classification.
- Baptism is not about “a perceptive awareness within oneself”¹⁷ *per se*. It represents and pictures the appeal a Christian made to God for mercy,

¹³ cf. Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 119

¹⁴ cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 108.

¹⁵ Köstenberger (et al), *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek*, KL 2664.

¹⁶ See Forbes, *1 Peter*, KL 4125. J.H.A. Hart, however, suggested it could simply be a genitive of possession (*The First Epistle General of Peter*, in *Expositor's Greek Testament*, vol. 5 [London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton, n.d.], 69).

¹⁷ Friberg s.v. “25575 συνείδησις,” 1.

1 Peter 3:21

*An Original Translation from the UBS-5 by Tyler Robbins
Revised October 2016*

forgiveness and grace in a spirit of repentance. What did this appeal consist of? It consisted of “a perceptive awareness” of one’s own unrighteousness, God’s holiness, Christ’s imputed righteousness, and His finished work.

ἀγαθῆς:

- (1) **Case** – an attributive genitive.

ἐπερώτημα:

- (1) **Case** – the subject nominative of the clause.

εἰς:

- (1) **Classification** – the preposition is expressing reference (“about, concerning”).¹⁸

θεόν:

- (1) **Case** – in the accusative because it is the object of the preposition εἰς.

δι’:

- (1) **Classification** – the preposition is expressing the reason why baptism is what it is – because of Christ’s finished work, which culminated in the resurrection.

ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ:

- (1) **Case** – in the genitive because it is the direct object of the preposition δι’.

¹⁸ See BDAG, s.v. “2292 εἰς,” 5 for this category.