

'Improve Your Baptism!'

1 Peter 3:21

I. The Sign and Significance of Baptism**A.** Exposition of the Text**B.** The Sign and Significance of Baptism

- 1)** Baptism as an antitype (*WLC 165*)
 - a)** The Figure of the Flood, particularly symbolizing salvation (Gen 7:14-24).
 - b)** The Figure of Circumcision, particularly symbolizing death to sin and union with Christ (Col 2:11-12, Titus 3:5, Rom 6:1-4).
 - c)** The Figure of the Exodus, particularly symbolizing redemption and our identity with Christ (1 Cor 10:1-2, Psa 77:16-17, Mt 28:19-20).
- 2)** The recipients of Baptism: Believers and their households (Acts 2:39)
 - a)** Believers from outside the visible church upon profession of faith (Gen 6:8,9)
 - b)** The children of believers (1 Pt 3:20; Gen 6:18; Acts 16:15, 33; 1 Cor 1:16)
- 3)** The Mode of Baptism, meaning the way in which baptism is administered (*WCF xxvIII.3*)
 - a)** Dipping, or Immersion
 - b)** Pouring (Acts 2:17-18; 10:45, 47).
 - c)** Sprinkling (Heb 9:10, 14)

C. Answering the Objection: But how is it said that there is grace administered in Baptism without it being salvific in and of itself? (1 Pt 3:21)

- 1)** The error of Rome: Baptismal justification
- 2)** The error of Lutherans: Baptismal regeneration
- 3)** The error of many modern evangelicals: Baptism as a mere act without sacramental significance
- 4)** The biblical answer from the Reformed Church: Be resolved to the will of God and make diligent use of the appointed means of grace (*WCF xxvIII.6*)

II. The Call To Improve Upon Our Baptism**A.** Explanation of this Duty (*WLC 167*)

- 1)** Definition of the word, *Improve*, meaning *Apply*
- 2)** When to improve your Baptism
- 3)** How to improve your Baptism

B. Uses from the Text, calling us to apply our Baptism

(1 Pt 3:21) —

- 1)** Be saved from the wrath of God through Christ!
- 2)** Having been united in Christ's death, put off the filth of sin! Fulfill your vows to God!
 - a)** To all who have professed Christ
 - b)** To parents of children who have yet to profess faith in Christ
 - c)** To baptized children
- 3)** Have a clear conscience before God!
- 4)** Look forward to Christ's return and the resurrection!
- 5)** Let our making use of the first sacrament aid our making use of the second!
 - a)** Do not merely look to the sign, but to what is signified in the sacrament.
 - b)** Make diligent use of the sacraments according to their proper purpose.
 - c)** Look to the hope that you have in Christ at the resurrection.

1 Peter 3:21 (NKJV)

- 21** 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