

Never too Small, Never too Old: Luther's Small Catechism

Week 9—Baptism

First

What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word.

Which is that word of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)

Second

What benefits does Baptism give?

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are these words and promises of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16)

Third

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three: "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying." (Titus 3:5-8)

Fourth

What does such baptizing with water indicate?

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes in Romans, chapter six: "We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Romans 6:4)

Taken from Martin Luther's Small Catechism

1. Why should we be baptized?

- *Because Christ commands it.*
 - Matthew 28:19—Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
- *Because we need it.*
 - Psalm 51:5—“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”
 - Romans 3:23—“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

2. What does baptism do?

- *Forgives sins and gives the Holy Spirit*
 - Acts 2:38-39—“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children.’”
- *Unites us to Christ’s death and resurrection*
 - Romans 6:3-4—“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”
 - Colossians 2:12—“...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.”
- *Saves us*
 - Titus 3:5—“He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”
 - 2 Peter 3:21—“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

3. Misc.

- *How often should I be baptized?*
 - Ephesians 4:4-6
- *Isn’t salvation my choice?*
 - Ephesians 2:8-9
 - John 1:12-13
 - John 15:16
 - Matthew 11:27
- *“Babies can’t believe.”*
 - Luke 1:44
 - Genesis 17:12→Colossians 2:11-12
- *What happens after baptism?*
 - Matthew 28:19-20