

Holy Baptism (Second Part)

What does Baptism give or profit? It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are such words and promises of God? Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Mark: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." [Mark 16:16]

1. What benefits does God give in Baptism, and how are they received by us?

From Luther's *Large Catechism* (IV: Baptism)

²³ In the second place, since we know now what Baptism is, and how it is to be regarded, we must also learn why and for what purpose it is instituted; that is, what it profits, gives, and works. And this also we cannot discern better than from the words of Christ above quoted: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.

²⁴⁻²⁵ Therefore state it most simply thus, that the power, work, profit, fruit, and end of Baptism is this, namely, to save... But to be saved, we know, is nothing else than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil, and to enter into the kingdom of Christ, and to live with Him forever.

²⁶ Here you see again how highly and precious we should esteem Baptism, because in it we obtain such an unspeakable treasure, which also indicates sufficiently that it cannot be ordinary mere water. For mere water could not do such a thing, but the Word does it, and (as said above) the fact that the name of God is comprehended therein.

²⁷ But where the name of God is, there must be also life and salvation, that it may indeed be called a divine, blessed, fruitful, and gracious water; for by the Word such power is imparted to Baptism that it is a laver of regeneration, as St. Paul also calls it, Titus 3:5...

³² In the third place, since we have learned the great benefit and power of Baptism, let us see further who is the person that receives what Baptism gives and profits.

³³ This is again most beautifully and clearly expressed in the words: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. That is, faith alone makes the person worthy to receive profitably the saving, divine water. For, since these blessings are here presented and promised in the words in and with the water, they cannot be received in any other way than by believing them with the heart.

³⁴ Without faith it profits nothing, notwithstanding it is in itself a divine superabundant treasure. Therefore this single word (He that believeth) effects this much that it excludes and repels all works which we can do, in the opinion that we obtain and merit salvation by them. For it is determined that whatever is not faith avails nothing nor receives anything.